The R.t Reverend
DR OFSPRING BLACKALL
late L.d Bishop of Exeter

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PRACTICAL DISCOURSES UPON OUR *SAVIOUR's* SERMON on the Mount.

In Eight Volumes.

By Ofspring Blackall, D. D.
Late Lord Biſhop of *Exeter.*

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With a PREFACE,
Giving ſome Account of the Work,
By the Moſt Reverend Father in God,
William, Lord Archbiſhop of *YORK,*
Primate of *England,* and Metropolitan.

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THE

PREFACE.

IT might ſeem abundantly ſufficient to recommend the following Sermons to the World, only to aſſure it, as I hereby do, that they are indeed the Sermons of that Right Reverend Author, whoſe Name they bear. For his conſtant way of Preaching was well known, in

this great City, to have been ſo excellent, (eaſy, clear, judicious, ſubſtantial, pious, affecting, and, upon all Accounts, truly uſeful and edifying) and he had thereupon ſo univerſally acquir'd the Reputation of being one of the beſt Preachers, which the laſt Century (above all others fruitful of good ones, to the Honour and Glory of our Church) had bred; that, I think, it may as fairly be preſum'd of his Sermons, as of moſt Men's, that there are hardly any of them, which would not be acceptable to the Publick. And this, I dare ſay, all thoſe, who have had the Happineſs of being, either the Hearers of his common Preaching, or the Readers of his printed Sermons, preach'd at Mr. *Boyle*'s Lecture and upon other

Extraor-

traordinary Occaſions, will readily allow.

But becauſe this general Preſumption has, in many Inſtances of late, been carried a great deal too far, and, upon the Stretch of it, the Poſthumous Works of Learned Men, without any manner of Judgment or Diſtinction, have been all obtruded upon the World, moſt commonly to its great Diſappointment, nay, and ſometimes even to its juſt Indignation; I ſhall purpoſely wave inſiſting on this preſumptive Argument in Favour of theſe Diſcourſes, and rather chuſe briefly to hint ſome few things, peculiar to the Sermons themſelves, which, all together at leaſt, will, I hope, be thought a very full Recommendation of them.

They are a complete Sett of Diſcourſes, upon one of the nobleſt and moſt important Subjects of our holy Religion, *viz.* A Syſtem of Chriſtian Morality, according to its utmoſt Improvement and Perfection, deliver'd by our Lord Himſelf, in his Sermon on the Mount. A Subject ſo exceeding great and comprehenſive, and withal ſo neceſſary to be thoroughly underſtood by all Chriſtians, as well Miniſters as People, in order to the forming of their own Practice and conſtant Tenor of Converſation, and directing that of others, right; and, moreover, ſo highly tending to God's and our bleſſed Saviour's Honour, and the preſent and future Happineſs of Mankind, when thus underſtood and apply'd; that

that I hardly know of any thing which ought to be receiv'd with more Joy and Eagerneſs, by every good Chriſtian, than a juſt Treatiſe upon this Subject. Many have been the Attempts upon it by almoſt all Divines, ancient and modern; who have wiſely judg'd, that it was impoſſible for them to employ their Time and Pains to better Purpoſe, than in ſtudying, explaining and enforcing, that divine Scheme of Philoſophy, which was to make both themſelves, and all the People committed to their Care, *perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* But, tho' ſuch a vaſt Number of Divines have, more or leſs, treated on this Subject; yet few, very few, have been ſo happy as to go quite through it,

it, as our Author has done.

Nor did he only make Choice of one of the beſt Subjects, and proſecute it, with unwearied Diligence, even unto the End; but he has likewiſe all along handled it in the moſt plain, practical, extenſive and uſeful manner poſſible; illuſtrating and confirming the Excellency of the Chriſtian, above all other, Morality; eſtabliſhing it in its fulleſt Force and Authority; adjuſting its eſſential Boundaries; demonſtrating its inward Power and Energy on the very *Spirit of the Mind*; opening and unfolding the Natures of all thoſe ſeveral Virtues and Vices, which it led him to conſider, with the greateſt Niceneſs and Particularity, and deducing and applying the minuteſt

Branches

Branches of each of them, to the various Caſes, Circumſtances, and Conditions of human Life; anſwering all Difficulties, which ariſe in this vaſt Variety of Caſes; and making uſe of the propereſt Motives, to encourage the habitual Practice of Virtue, and diſcourage that of Vice, to the very utmoſt. A Work of admirable Uſe, even to the Clergy themſelves; a great and moſt difficult Part of whoſe Buſineſs lies in fixing ſolidly the Foundations, and ſettling clearly the true Limits, of moral Good and Evil; in delineating the proper Features of each particular Virtue and Vice, ſo as ſufficiently to diſtinguiſh them from each other; in reſolving and quieting the Doubts and Scruples which diſturb their People's

People's Minds, in relation to nice Caſes of Morality; and, above all, in poſſeſſing them with a juſt Senſe of the great Heightnings and Improvements which our bleſſed Saviour has given, in this Sermon of his, to the Heathen, nay and even Jewiſh, Ethics; and of the entire Weight and Streſs, which he has here laid upon inward Holineſs and Purity of Mind, reaching to the very *Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, cleanſing the whole Underſtanding, Will and Affections, from every the leaſt voluntary Motion, Propenſion, or Inclination towards Evil, and reſtraining as well the Purpoſe and Deſign of committing, as the actual Commiſſion of it. And a Work which ought hardly ever to

be

be out of the Hands of the Laity, who are equally engag'd to make it the main Employment of their Lives to be daily and continually improving themſelves, as far as they are able, in the Knowledge and Practice of thoſe admirable Rules, laid down in this Sermon, for their moral Conduct, and who can no where find a better Help towards ſuch an Improvement, than in theſe clear and full Comments upon thoſe Rules.

And indeed, ſo ſenſible of this were the moſt judicious Hearers of theſe Sermons, both of the Clergy and Laity, (vaſt Numbers of both which ſorts flock'd to the hearing of them, with a more than ordinary Zeal, as ſoon as they underſtood our Author's Deſign of going

quite

quite through this important Subject) that the Reverend Dr. *Stuart*, his Chaplain, has lately inform'd me, that he has heard him ſay, "That the Importunity of ſome of "his Friends, to have him print "ſeveral of theſe Sermons, ſoon "after they were preach'd, was ſo "great, that his Refuſal was not "always kindly interpreted. And "the Doctor himſelf well remem-"bers, that he has heard ſeveral, "that were excellent Preachers "themſelves, and others as exact "Hearers, that had been part of "his Auditory, commend theſe "Sermons, as ſome of the moſt "excellent in their Kind, and ex-"preſs a great Deſire, for their "own Satisfaction and the Good of "the World, to ſee them in print.

Nay,

Nay, ſo ſenſible was our Author himſelf, as far as his great Modeſty would let him, that theſe Sermons might poſſibly be of ſome Service to the World, that he always deſign'd them to be made publick. And, to this End, about ten Months before his Death, he caus'd them to be revis'd, and at that Time, when his Thoughts were wholly ſet upon doing all the Honour to God, and Good to the Souls of Men, which he was capable of, he directed the Publication of them. And whoever had any true Knowledge of this good Man, will eaſily be perſuaded, that when he who was ſo true a Judge of what was likely to do Service to Religion, and withal had ſo mean an Opinion of all his own Performan-

ces,

ces, could prevail upon himſelf to order any thing of his to be made publick, for this End, it moſt undoubtedly and moſt highly deſerv'd to be ſo.

To what has been ſaid, might I have Leave to add, That our Author was, by his happy Temper of Mind, and truly Chriſtian Converſation of Life, peculiarly fitted to treat well on this Subject; I think you could not poſſibly want any thing, to induce you to believe, that he has treated on it to Perfection. He was indeed Himſelf, All that he was to preach; and had liv'd over every Rule of this divine Philoſophy, before he preſum'd to teach it to others; and, by ſo doing, he had feelingly and experimentally learn'd its

Reaſo-

Reaſonableneſs, Uſefulneſs, Neceſſity, Practicableneſs, and true way of practiſing it, and its Conduciveneſs to attain that bleſſed State, which it propos'd and promis'd to Mankind. I, who had the Happineſs of a long and intimate Friendſhip with him, do ſincerely declare, that, in my whole Converſation, I never met with a more perfect Pattern of a true Chriſtian Life, in all its Parts, than in Him: ſo much primitive Simplicity and Integrity; ſuch conſtant Evenneſs of Mind, and uniform Conduct of Behaviour; ſuch unaffected, and yet moſt ardent Piety towards God; ſuch orthodox and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt; ſuch diſintereſted and fervent Charity to all Mankind; ſuch profound

Modeſty, Humility and Sobriety; ſuch an equal Mixture of Meekneſs and Courage, of Cheerfulneſs and Gravity, of pleaſing and profiting all he convers'd with; ſuch an exact Diſcharge of all relative Duties; and, in one Word, ſuch an Indifferency to this lower World, and the Things of it, and ſuch an entire Affection for, and joyous Hope and Expectation of, the Things which are Above; as are rarely to be found All together, even in very good Chriſtians. And as he had a moſt lively Experience of all the Duties, ſo had he likewiſe of the Beatitudes belonging to them, which he has attempted to deſcribe: he had as true an Enjoyment of all that is really Good in *the Life that now is*, and as

ſprightly

ſprightly Foretaſts of the Pleaſures of *that which is to come*, as ever Man had: the *Teſtimony* of *his* own *Conſcience*, and that of the Holy Spirit *bearing witneſs with it*, that he was *a Child of God*, fill'd his Mind with that *Peace of God which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, and continually cheriſh'd and kept up in it a *Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory*. Inſomuch, that we may juſtly apply to him, on this Occaſion, thoſe Words of the *Pſalmiſt*, *His Heart was hot within him*; *the* heavenly *Fire* was fully *kindled* in it, before *he ſpake with his Tongue*.

Many Inſtances of all this I cou'd eaſily give you, were I not now writing a Preface only, not a Life; however, one I cannot paſs over, and

that indeed will, in a great meaſure, ſuppoſe and imply all the reſt; *viz.* the exemplary Manner in which he bore his laſt Sickneſs and Death. God Almighty was pleas'd, as to his infinite Wiſdom often ſeems beſt, for the Manifeſtation of his own Glory, and the Trial of his Servants Virtue, to exerciſe this good Man, with a long, painful, and exceeding troubleſome Sickneſs, before he would *let him depart in Peace.* And, bleſſed God! how illuſtriouſly did thy Glory, and thy Servant's Faithfulneſs, ſhine forth in all this Trial? What one of all thoſe many difficult Graces and Virtues, which are to adorn a ſick and dying Bed, what higheſt Degree of any one of them, was wanting, to ſpeak thy Praiſes, and

and thy Servant's Love and Duty, much more ſtrong than Death it ſelf? Did ever his Patience or Reſignation to thy Will, in the leaſt fail him? Had he a Thought or Wiſh, which was not brought into perfect Obedience to it? Did he repine at any thing, but that he was not capable of doing Thee more Service and Glory? To ſay all at once; Did he not continually amaze all about him, with the Wonders of his Courage and Reſolution, with the Calmneſs of his Temper and Serenity of his Mind, with the Firmneſs of his Hope and Truſt in God, with his Fearleſneſs of Death, with his humble Confidence in the Mercies of his Saviour, with his Contempt of this World, and entire Satisfaction in

the Proſpect of a better? But I will no longer uſe my own Words, tho' upon this glorious, and, to a good Chriſtian, moſt delightful Occaſion; but rather give you thoſe of one, who was himſelf an Eye-Witneſs of a great part of this triumphant Scene; which take as follows,——" The ſlow Progreſs of " his painful Diſtemper was a long " Exerciſe of ſome of the moſt dif- " ficult paſſive Virtues in the Chri- " ſtian Life; and it afforded all " that were about him ſuch a no- " ble Pattern of Chriſtian Magna- " nimity, that Strangers to his " Caſe could ſcarce believe his Pa- " tience was try'd: even among " his Acquaintance, ſeveral that " viſited him were deluded by his " Chearfulneſs to declare, when

" they

" they came away, that they could
" not think him ſo ill as we ſadly
" knew him to be. The only
" Sign I ever remember him to
" have given of any Impatience,
" was at the Apprehenſion that
" his great Pains made him fret-
" ful; for he fancy'd he ſometimes
" ſpoke to us peeviſhly; ſo ſe-
" vere a Cenſure, without any
" Occaſion, ſurpriz'd the whole
" Company, and all that were pre-
" ſent immediately proteſted, as
" we well might do, againſt an
" Accuſation ſo groundleſs.

" I am apt to believe the Ge-
" nerality of Readers, when they
" come to the third Diſcourſe in
" this Collection, will be inclin'd
" to the Thought, which, I ac-
" knowledge, upon my firſt Rea-

" ding was my own, that ſome
" Parts of this Sermon are drawn
" above the Life, and that few or
" none, in exquiſite Pain, poſſeſs
" their Souls in the degree of Pa-
" tience which is therein deſcrib'd.
" But I ſoon after ſaw my Miſtake,
" in the Example of my good
" Lord; for I can aſſure the Rea-
" der, that the Right Reverend
" Author, in the Day of Tribula-
" tion, diſcover'd the ſame happy
" Temper that he recommends to
" us. He was himſelf one of thoſe
" bleſſed Mourners, who, as he ſays,
can ſuffer the ſoreſt Pains without murmuring or Impatience; nay, as if they had no Senſe of the Pain which they endure, do ſhew forth in their Speech, their Looks, and all their Behaviour, all the Signs

of

of inward Peace and Pleaſure.

" The Day after the Mortifica-
" tion appear'd, of which he dy'd,
" I waited upon him, according to
" his own Order, to give him the
" holy Sacrament; at my firſt co-
" ming to his Bed-ſide, I ask'd
" him how his Lordſhip did? when
" he anſwer'd, with as great Chear-
" fulneſs as I ever heard him
" ſpeak, *I am glad to ſee you, I ſhall now, I hope, be very well in a little time.*

" As he was us'd, before he
" came to this Extremity, to la-
" ment his Incapacity for ſeveral
" Offices of a Biſhop, ſo this Re-
" flection ſtuck by him to the laſt;
" and while all the proper Appli-
" cations, that could be thought
" of, were uſing, to ſtop the grow-

" ing

" ing Gangrene, he was pleas'd to " ſay to us all then ſtanding about " him, *Why all this Pains to re-prieve an uſeleſs Life at beſt, and keep out a better Man?* " And all " Applications were as vain as his " Lordſhip could wiſh them; for " a few Days put an End to a Life, " which none but himſelf thought " uſeleſs.

" On the fatal Morning I at-" tended his Lordſhip, and by his " own Direction us'd the Recom-" mendatory Prayer: before I be-" gan, he deſir'd me to let him " be laid in a Poſture, which he " judg'd moſt proper for recom-" mending his own Soul; after he " was thus laid, he ſaid, *You may now begin; and I hope the ſame Mercy that was ſhew'd to a Friend*

of

of mine, while I was doing him this good Office, will be granted to me; and by that time your Prayer is ended, my Soul will be in the Hands of that merciful Saviour, to whom you recommend it. "And "it was not long indeed, before "our Prayers were heard; for, a-"bout two Hours after, he re-"ſign'd up his pious Soul to the "Eternal Comforter.

God grant, that, by reading the excellent Diſcourſes, and contemplating the inſtructive Example of this bleſſed Man, we may all learn to prepare our ſelves to meet Death with the ſame Comfort of Mind, and to recommend our Spirits into the Hands of a moſt merciful Saviour, with the

ſame

ſame well-grounded Aſſurance, with which he did.

Amen, *even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly!*

London, July 12. 1717.

W. EBOR'

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And he opened his Mouth, and taught them, ſaying,
Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

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OF THE
BEATITUDES
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AND THE
PERSONS
They belong to.

DISCOURSE I.

Of the Beatitudes in general, and the Perſons they belong to.

MATTH. v. 1, 2, 3.

And ſeeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain; and when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him;

And he opened his Mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE two firſt Verſes of this Chapter are only introductory to that Sermon of our *Saviour*'s (uſually call'd his *Sermon upon the Mount*) which follows after; relating the Place, Occaſion, and o-

ther Circumſtances thereof. I ſhall not therefore dwell long upon them, but intend only to make ſome few Remarks and Obſervations from thence, which I ſhall alſo but only mention; and then proceed to the Sermon it ſelf, which begins at the third Verſe, and is continued in this and the two next Chapters; on all which, I deſign hereafter, if it ſhall pleaſe God, to diſcourſe to you as I ſhall have opportunity: And indeed the whole Sermon is a moſt excellent portion of Scripture, which therefore we ſhould do well to imprint not only in our Hearts but in our Memories too; that ſo we may have always ready in our Minds, for the continual direction of our Practice and Behaviour, thoſe moſt pure and excellent Rules of Life which our *Saviour* here delivers to us.

Seeing the Multitudes, ſays the *Evangeliſt*, *he went up into a Mountain.*

One Reaſon of this might be to withdraw himſelf from that great Crowd of People that had followed him from ſeveral parts, not ſo much with a deſign to be inſtructed or better'd by him, as out of cu-

rioſity, to ſee his Miracles and to admire his Perſon. *There followed him*, ſays the *Evangeliſt*, in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, *great Multitudes of People from* Galilee, *and from* Decapolis, *and from* Jeruſalem, *and from* Judea; *and from beyond* Jordan. Many of theſe therefore being not fit to receive his Doctrine, he might think it moſt convenient to withdraw himſelf from the Multitude before he began this Sermon, which he deſign'd only for his own Diſciples; *i. e.* only for thoſe who had before been taught, or came then with an honeſt mind to be taught and inſtructed by him; and who he knew would ſtill continue to follow him after he was gone away from the reſt; as in the event it prov'd.

And this, I ſuppoſe, might be another Reaſon of his going up into a Mountain; *viz.* That being on a riſing ground he might be the better heard by all the Company, which was ſtill very numerous; as appears from the 28th ℣. of the viith Chapter; where, at the Concluſion of this Sermon, it is ſaid that *the Peo-*

ple were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine.

Another Reaſon of his going up into a Mountain, given by ſome, is, that it was in correſpondence to the manner in which the Law had been given before to the *Jews*; *viz.* from Mount *Sinai*; and that it was fit that the Chriſtian Law ſhould be delivered in the like manner.

Some other Reaſons alſo there are given of this, which I think it needleſs to mention; becauſe I judge it not material to inſiſt longer on this Circumſtance.

It follows, *when he was ſet*; he ſat down while he delivered his Sermon. This was the uſual Poſture of thoſe who taught among the *Jews*; whence our *Saviour*, *Matth.* xxiii. 2. ſpeaking of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, the authorized Teachers of the Law, ſays, that they *ſat in* Moſes *Seat*. This Cuſtom therefore our *Saviour*, who never affected needleſs ſingularity, alſo obſerved; as is particularly noted, not only here, but in *Luke* iv. 20. where it is ſaid that *Jeſus* being in the Synagogue, *there was given to him the Book of the Prophet* Iſaias, in which after he had read

read ſome Portion ſtanding, *he then cloſed the Book, and gave it again to the Miniſter, and ſat down*, and began to preach to the People upon that Text which he had before read out of the Prophet.

And what I obſerve from hence is this; that it is by no means agreeable to the Spirit of Chriſtianity to make a diviſion or diſturbance in the Church, upon the account of any innocent and indifferent Rites and Ceremonies; but that it is our Duty in all ſuch things to obſerve the Uſage and Cuſtom of the Church in which we live. Our *Saviour* himſelf, you ſee, did ſo; he conform'd to all the innocent Cuſtoms then in uſe in the *Jewiſh Church*; he obſerved their Days, even thoſe which had not been expreſſly inſtituted by God; particularly that Feſtival that was obſerved in remembrance of the Dedication of the Altar, after it had been prophan'd by *Antiochus*, which was ordain'd in the time of the *Maccabees*; that Feaſt, I ſay, tho' of human Inſtitution only, our *Saviour* obſerved, and approv'd by his own Preſence at it, as you may ſee in

John x. 22. And in his teaching and preaching to the People he contented himſelf to uſe the ſame Poſture which he found was then obſerv'd by other Teachers. He affected not to differ from others in ſuch ſmall and indifferent matters; but becauſe it was the uſual Poſture of thoſe who expounded the Law, and inſtructed the People, to do it ſitting, he alſo did the ſame; tho' perhaps another Poſture might have been as decent and convenient as that, and I'm ſure would be thought more ſo now-a-days, now that the Cuſtom is otherwiſe.

You ſee then that it is not a Spirit of Chriſtianity, or of true Religion, which works in thoſe Men of our Age, who raiſe diſturbances in the Church upon the account of ſuch trivial matters; but 'tis a Spirit of Faction and Schiſm, of Peeviſhneſs, Obſtinacy, and Pride. They think themſelves too good to conform to the Cuſtoms of others, but they would have all conform to theirs; they would be ſubject to no Law themſelves, but they wou'd give Law to all others; and no Cuſtom they think

think is tolerable unleſs they are the Beginners of it.

It follows in the Text, *and when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him*; his *Diſciples*, *i.e.* not only the twelve or the ſeventy, but the whole Multitude of his Diſciples; all thoſe who by ſeeing his Miracles had been induc'd to believe him to be the *Chriſt*, and follow'd him with an honeſt Mind to be inſtructed by him in the Will of God. For as yet there was no Diviſion made between the Apoſtles and the other Diſciples; that follows after, at the xth Chapter of this Goſpel of St. *Matthew*. And therefore St. *Luke*, where he recites this Sermon of our *Saviour*'s, or another very like it, calls our *Saviour*'s Auditors the *Company* (the *Greek* word is ὄχλος, the Croud or Multitude) *of his Diſciples*, *Luke* vi. 17. and in ℣. 1. of the next Chapter, he ſays, he ſpake thoſe Sayings *in the Audience of the People*. And I obſerv'd before, that here in St. *Matthew* it is noted by the *Evangeliſt*, Ch. vii. ℣. 28. at the Concluſion of this Sermon, that *the People* (*i.e.* cer-

tainly more than the twelve, or the ſeventy, or any ſmall number) *were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine, becauſe he taught them as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.*

And what I note and obſerve from hence is this, that the Rules and Precepts here given by our *Saviour*, in this his Sermon upon the Mount, are ſuch as concern all *Chriſtians*, of what ſtate or profeſſion ſoever they be; that they are ſuch as all that call themſelves *Chriſt*'s Diſciples are oblig'd to obſerve and live by, particularly the Laity as well as the Clergy.

It is a great miſtake therefore of ſome Interpreters, who expound this Sermon of our *Saviour*'s as giving Directions only to the *Biſhops* and *Paſtors* of the *Chriſtian* Church, conſider'd as the *Succeſſors* of the *Apoſtles* of our Lord, and of his other *ſelect Diſciples*, whom he commiſſioned to *preach* the *Goſpel*. For had he meant this as a Charge to the Clergy only, certainly he would have deliver'd it to them only; but it is evident that he ſpake this Sermon to the whole Multitude

of

of his Diſciples, who were not to be all of them *Apoſtles* or *Prophets*, or *Evangeliſts*, or *Teachers*; nay, he ſpake it before he had yet choſen any to be *Apoſtles*, and before he had given Commiſſion to any to go forth and preach in his Name; for the choice of the *Apoſtles* (as I noted before) is not related till the xth Chapter, and the choice of the ſeventy Diſciples was not till ſome time after that.

Now tho' indeed it muſt be confeſs'd that the order of time is not exactly obſerved by the *Evangeliſts*, in their relating the Hiſtory of the Sermons and Miracles of our Lord. For what one *Evangeliſt* relates firſt, another oftentimes relates as done afterwards; yet from this Sermon of our Lord's being plac'd by our *Evangeliſt*, before he himſelf had given any account of our Lord's commiſſioning any to be Preachers of his Goſpel, we may very fairly argue that this Sermon was not deſign'd only for the uſe of Preachers, and to direct their Behaviour only. For it would be very abſurd, and by no means agreeable to the Rules of Hiſtory,

for

for the *Evangeliſt* to relate a Sermon of our Lord which was ſpoken to his Diſciples, conſider'd only as *Miniſters* and *Preachers* of his *Goſpel*; when as yet he had not told us that there were any number of the Diſciples choſen and ſet apart, or ſo much as deſign'd to be choſen and ſet apart for this Office.

From all which, I think, it appears that this Sermon was ſpoken by our Lord to all his Diſciples; and in them to all that ſhould ſucceed them in the belief and profeſſion of the Goſpel, *i. e.* to *all Chriſtians*: and conſequently that every one that names the Name of *Chriſt* (every one of the Flock, as well as every *Paſtor* of the Flock) is obliged to lead his Life according to thoſe Rules and Preſcriptions which are here given by our *Saviour*.

It follows in the Text; *and when his Diſciples were come unto him*, *i.e.* were aſſembled together in a Body round about him, *he opened his Mouth and taught them.*

In which Phraſe, *he open'd his Mouth*, ſome think there is a great Myſtery contain'd,

tain'd, but, as I ſuppoſe, without any reaſon, it being no other than a common *Hebrew* Phraſe frequently uſed in Scripture, when any one begins a continu'd ſet Diſcourſe. So that I believe nothing more was meant by it here, but only that our Lord after he was ſeated, and by that Poſture had ſignify'd his Deſign to diſcourſe to the People, waited a while and kept ſilence until the whole Company of his Diſciples were come up to him, and plac'd conveniently about him to hear him; which being done he then *open'd his Mouth*, *i. e.* he then brake ſilence, and began that ſet and continu'd Diſcourſe, commonly call'd his Sermon upon the Mount, which is contain'd in this and in the two following Chapters.

And now I paſs from the *Evangeliſt*'s Introduction to this Sermon of our Lord, to the Sermon it ſelf, which begins with the eight Beatitudes, as they are commonly call'd; the firſt whereof is in theſe words, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

In

In this, and the nine following Verſes, our *Saviour* advances ſeveral ſtrange Paradoxes, affirming thoſe to be moſt bleſſed who in the Eye of the World are the moſt unhappy. *Bleſſed*, ſays he, *are the poor in Spirit*; *bleſſed are they that mourn*; *bleſſed are the Meek*; *bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt*, &c. And to ſuch as theſe he not only pronounces a preſent Bleſſedneſs, but likewiſe promiſes a future Reward. *Theirs*, ſays he, *is the Kingdom of Heaven*; *they ſhall be comforted*; *they ſhall inherit the Earth*; *they ſhall be filled*, &c.

Now as the ſeveral Virtues and Graces here ſpoken of are of different kinds, for 'tis one thing to be *poor in Spirit*, another thing to *mourn*, another thing to be *meek*, and ſo on; ſo, I ſuppoſe, the *preſent Bleſſedneſs* belonging to them is not the very ſame to every one of them, but differing; and that the *poor in ſpirit* are bleſſed in one reſpect, *they that mourn* in another, *the meek* in a third, and ſo on; every Virtue having ſome peculiar Bleſſedneſs annex'd to it, ſuch as is ſuitable to its

its Nature, and naturally reſults from the Exerciſe and Practice of it. So that conſequently, he that is *poor in Spirit* may enjoy at leaſt in ſome meaſure the Bleſſedneſs naturally reſulting from that ſingle Virtue, tho' he be not *meek*, tho' he does not *mourn*, tho' he does not *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, and tho' he be not endued with the other Virtues and Graces after ſpoken of; and ſo may any of the reſt, here pronounc'd bleſſed, be in *ſome meaſure* bleſſed only by the poſſeſſion of that ſingle Grace or Virtue to which any Bleſſedneſs is annex'd, altho' he be (if it be ſuppos'd that he can be ſo) deſtitute of the reſt, to which a Bleſſedneſs is likewiſe annex'd.

But I take the Caſe to be otherwiſe, as to the *future Reward* that is ſeverally promiſed to each of theſe Virtues or Graces; for the future Reward of all Virtue is one and the ſame, *viz.* eternal Life and Happineſs; of which, tho' there may be different Degrees, yet the loweſt Degree of all is excluſive of all Pain and Miſery, and infinitely beyond any Happi-

neſs

neſs that is attainable in this World.

Eternal Life and Happineſs being therefore the Reward that is promiſed (altho' under different Expreſſions) to each of theſe Virtues and Graces; it plainly follows that we are not to underſtand this Promiſe as made to *each* of them *by it ſelf*, but to *all* of them together *in Conjunction*; not to thoſe who are *only poor in Spirit*, or thoſe who do *only mourn*; or thoſe who have *only* the Grace of *Meekneſs*, and the like; but to thoſe who are endu'd with *all theſe Graces*, with *Poverty of Spirit*, with *Contrition* and *godly Sorrow*, with *Meekneſs*, with *Purity of Heart*, and all the reſt which follow after.

The Bleſſedneſs therefore that is annex'd to each of theſe Graces by it ſelf (if we take it as including both the preſent Bleſſedneſs and the future Reward of ſuch as are endu'd with it; this Bleſſedneſs, I ſay,) is not an *abſolute*, but a *comparative* Bleſſedneſs. And what is meant, when it is ſaid, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*;

Heaven; or, *bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*, and the like; is only that he that has any one of theſe Virtues or Graces, even tho' he has but one only, is more bleſſed than he that has it not, and has a better Title to the Promiſe of eternal Life that is made to it; but not that any one Virtue or Grace alone is ſufficient to make a Man completely bleſſed, or to give him a full right and title to the promiſed Reward. For the Obedience which God requires is impartial and univerſal, the Obedience of the whole Man, and an Obedience to all the divine Laws. And St. *James* tells us expreſſly, That *he that keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all*, Jam. ii. 10.

And now this being premiſed once for all to prevent any Miſtakes, I proceed to diſcourſe of the firſt of the Beatitudes, expreſs'd in the words which I have before read to you: *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

In diſcourſing on which I ſhall proceed in this Method. Firſt,

I ſhall

I ſhall ſhew who are the Perſons here ſpoken of; who are the *poor in Spirit*. And, as I go along,

I ſhall ſhew likewiſe wherein conſiſts the preſent Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Men, and what will be their future Reward. *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Firſt, I am to enquire and ſhew who are the Perſons here ſpoken of; who are the *poor in Spirit*.

And of this Phraſe, *poor in Spirit*, there are divers Interpretations given by Commentators upon the place.

1. Some by *poor in Spirit* underſtand ſuch as are of poor and low Condition in the World. And this Interpretation they ground upon that place in *Luke* vi. 20. where our *Saviour* makes the ſame Promiſe to his Diſciples, conſidered only as poor; *he lifted up his Eyes upon his Diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed are the Poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of God*; and to them he oppoſes ſuch as are rich and great in the World, pronouncing a woe againſt them, at ℣. 24. of that Chapter; *Woe unto*

to you that are rich, for ye have receiv'd your Conſolation.

And it muſt indeed be granted that there is a Bleſſedneſs belonging to the poor, merely *as poor*; inaſmuch as ſuch are for the moſt part in a better preparation of Mind to receive and embrace the Goſpel, than the rich are, as the Scripture teſtifies in ſeveral Places, and was abundantly confirm'd by Experience in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity; wherein, as the Apoſtle obſerves, 1 *Cor.* i. 26. *Not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble were call'd.* And to the ſame purpoſe is that of St. *James*, Ch. ii. ℣. 5. *Hath not God choſen the poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him?* And our *Saviour*, to ſhew the Difficulty of Salvation to the rich, eſpecially in thoſe times of Perſecution, expreſſes it by a proverbial Phraſe ſignifying an Impoſſibility: *Matth.* xix. 24. *It is eaſier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.*

But nevertheleſs, I do not think that our *Saviour* in the Text did by *poor in Spirit*, mean in general ſuch as are poor and low in the World; it being certain that the poor, merely as ſuch, and without any other Condition or virtuous Qualification, have no Claim or Title to the Kingdom of Heaven. For there are the Devil's poor as well as God's poor, *i.e.* ſuch as make themſelves poor only by Idleneſs or Profuſeneſs, as well as ſuch as become ſo by the keeping of a good Conſcience, and by the Providence of God: And there is no ground, I'm ſure, either from Scripture or Reaſon, to believe that that Poverty which is occaſion'd only by Men's Negligence or Extravagance, does entitle them either to a Bleſſing here, or to a Reward hereafter.

Beſides, if our *Saviour* had here meant only ſuch as are poor, and all ſuch, by whatſoever means or chance they become ſo, the addition of that other word in the Text, *in Spirit*, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*, had been perfectly needleſs and ſuperfluous; nay, not only ſo, but it would have

have been pernicious, ſerving only to render intricate and doubtful a Sentence, which, if that word had not been added, would have been very plain and eaſy.

And as to what is ſaid to juſtify this Interpretation, *viz.* that St. *Luke* expreſſes the ſame Sentence, without this Addition, ſaying only, *Bleſſed are the Poor.* The Anſwer is eaſy; namely, that however in that Chapter of St. *Luke* there are many Paſſages very like to thoſe which we meet with in this Sermon of our Lord upon the Mount; yet it is not certain that it is the ſame Diſcourſe of our *Saviour*, which is there recorded by St. *Luke*, and here related by St. *Matthew:* Nay, I think it is rather more probable that they were different Sermons, and were preached at different Times, and upon different Occaſions; and if ſo, there is then no neceſſity of expounding any Paſſage in the one *Evangeliſt* by the like Paſſage in the other; and of ſuppoſing that the ſame thing was certainly meant in both Places. Or if it be ſuppoſed that the Sermons were the ſame, and conſequently that this Paſſage

in St. *Matthew* is exactly the ſame in Senſe with that in St. *Luke*, altho' they be ſomewhat differently expreſs'd by the *Evangeliſts*; yet even in this Caſe, I think it is plainly more reaſonable to interpret that Paſſage in St. *Luke* which is expreſs'd ſhorter, by this in St. *Matthew* which is expreſs'd more fully and largely, and to ſuppoſe that he by *poor* meant ſuch as are *poor in Spirit*, as well as poor in Fortune, whether they be poor in Fortune or no; than to ſuppoſe that St. *Matthew* hath here made a needleſs Addition to our *Saviour*'s Words; and ſuch an Addition too, as might very probably lead his Readers into a Miſtake of our Lord's meaning. For Poverty of Spirit, whatever be the meaning of it, ſeems however not to be the ſame thing with Poverty of State and Condition; and therefore it can't well be ſuppoſed that if theſe Words of St. *Matthew* do give a true account of our *Saviour*'s Speech, he meant the Promiſe only to the poor, conſider'd as poor, without any regard at all to their Spirit and Temper.

For

For theſe Reaſons therefore I reject this Interpretation; taking it for granted, that the Promiſe of the Kingdom of Heaven, here made by our Saviour to the *poor in Spirit*, is made to a *ſtate* and *temper* of *Mind*, and not to a *ſtate* or *condition* of *Life*; for in this there is manifeſtly no Virtue at all, it not being a matter of our own Choice, whether we ſhall be poor or rich in this World, for that depends wholly upon the Pleaſure and Providence of God: It is *he that maketh poor, and maketh rich; that bringeth low, and that lifteth up.* But to be of a good Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind is indeed a Virtue, and a Subject proper for Reward.

2. Therefore there are others, who being ſenſible that meer Poverty is no Virtue, (becauſe nothing is a Virtue but what is choſen; and there are a great many poor that do not chooſe to be ſo, that would much rather be rich, if they could tell how; being ſenſible therefore, I ſay, that mere Poverty is no Virtue) and yet willing to underſtand the Word *poor* in its common Senſe, they conceive that the

Deſign of that Addition, which is here made by St. *Matthew* in the Word *Spirit*, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*, was to appropriate the Bleſſedneſs here annex'd, and the Reward here promis'd, to Poverty; to ſuch Poverty only as is voluntary and choſen. *Bleſſed are the poor*, ſays St. *Luke*; *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*, ſays St. *Matthew*; *i. e.* ſay theſe Interpreters, bleſſed are they, who if born to Eſtates, or who, after they have acquir'd a large Portion of the World, do then make Poverty their Choice, do then voluntarily renounce the World, do then relinquiſh their Riches, and diſpoſing of what worldly Goods they have to pious Uſes, do chooſe to live in want and beggery. And in this Senſe *Maldonate*, and divers others of the Popiſh Commentators, do expound this Paſſage; as if our *Saviour* did hereby give countenance and encouragement to the Order of their mendicant Friers, and their other Fraternities of Monks, who, being retir'd into a Cloyſter, have nothing elſe to live upon but what has been ſettled upon, or is daily given

given to their Society, by the Charity of others.

But this Interpretation of the Words is perfectly groundleſs, and alſo manifeſtly falſe. For,

1. It is not a Chriſtian Duty required of all, ſo to renounce the World, and to give up their Eſtates to others, and to live themſelves upon Alms and Charity. For if it were required of all to be Beggers, and in Obedience to this Precept all ſhould become ſo, there would be none then in a Capacity to relieve them. If no Chriſtian might lawfully keep ſo much of the World to himſelf as was ſufficient for his own Uſe, none of them, to be ſure, could have wherewithal to ſupply the Wants of others. Nay, even the *Papiſts* themſelves, who do ſo much magnify the voluntary Poverty and Beggery (as they call it) of their religious Orders, yet do not preſs the ſame as a neceſſary Duty upon all Chriſtians; which yet they would be bound to do, if they thought it a neceſſary and indiſpenſible Condition of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven. But now

the Kingdom of Heaven is only promiſed to ſuch as are *poor in Spirit*; all others are excluded from it; whoever is not *poor in Spirit* has no Claim or Title to it; either therefore they muſt grant, that by *poor in Spirit* our *Saviour* did not mean ſuch as voluntarily renounce the World, and chuſe to live upon Alms; or elſe they muſt condemn all that do not ſo, as deficient in a neceſſary Chriſtian Duty, and pronounce that they have no Part or Portion in the Kingdom of God; which yet is what they dare not do.

2. There is no Inſtance to be given in Scripture wherein this Phraſe, *in Spirit*, does ſignify, in Will, in Choice, or the like: And therefore ſeeing the Senſe of the Words does not neceſſarily reſtrain it to this Signification here, it is manifeſtly without ground to put ſuch an Interpretation upon it, and to ſuppoſe that the Phraſe is uſed here in a Senſe quite different from what it is any where elſe uſed in holy Scripture. Nay,

3. So far is the Goſpel from giving Encouragement to that which they ſo much magnify,

magnify, as the moſt ſublime and excellent Virtue, I mean, voluntary Want and Beggery; the chuſing to live upon the Alms of others, when we have wherewithal to maintain our ſelves, or are in a Capacity to procure a Maintenance for our ſelves by our own honeſt Labour, that it expreſſly forbids it as a great Fault and Scandal; every where commanding Men to be induſtrious and laborious in their Callings, that ſo they may both live of themſelves, and alſo be in a Condition to contribute towards the Maintenance of others, who either thro' Age or Sickneſs are not able to get their own living; and forbidding to maintain in Idleneſs ſuch as are able to work, but will not: Thus, to name no other Places, in 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 6. *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw your ſelves from,* i. e. that ye give no Relief or Aſſiſtance to, any *Brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us; for——when we were with you this we commanded, that if any Man would not work,*

work, neither ſhould he eat. For we hear that there are ſome among you that walk diſorderly, working not at all—— Now them that are ſuch, we command and exhort, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that with Quietneſs they work, and eat their own Bread.

Theſe Words of the *Apoſtle* are plain and expreſs; and from hence it clearly appears, that voluntary Want and Beggery is ſo far from being a Chriſtian Duty, that it is not allowed by the Goſpel to any to beg of, to be burthenſome to, or to receive Alms from, others, but to ſuch only as by ſome Diſability, which is not in their Power to remove, are not in a Capacity to maintain themſelves; and conſequently that the *religious Order* of *Mendicants* (as the *Papiſts* call them) are ſo far from having a better Title than others to the Kingdom of Heaven, that if the Diſcipline of the Church were duly exerciſed, they would be caſt out of the Church and Communion of the Faithful, as diſorderly Walkers.

3. Others there are, who by *poor in Spirit* underſtand ſuch as are of a meek and quiet Diſpoſition of Mind, not eaſily provoked to Anger, not apt to bear Grudge and Malice againſt others. And to this purpoſe they obſerve, that the Word πνεῦμα, here tranſlated *Spirit*, does ſometimes ſignify Anger; whence, they ſay, *poor in Spirit*, or in Anger, (if the Word be ſo taken here) muſt ſignify ſuch as have little or no Anger, ſuch as are ſlow to Wrath, ſuch as are not apt to take Fire upon every little Affront that is offer'd them. Salmaſius in Synopſ. Crit. *pag.* 115. *l.* 69.

And this Interpretation of the Words is indeed a good one, but I believe it is not the right one. The Words taken in this Senſe have a good meaning, and contain a true propoſition; for they who are of this meek and peaceable Temper of Mind are indeed bleſſed, and have alſo upon this account a good Claim and Title to the Kingdom of Heaven: But nevertheleſs, I cannot ſuppoſe that they were the Perſons meant by our *Saviour* in this Place; partly, becauſe this Interpretation of the Words ſeems

ſeems forc'd and ſtrain'd; for tho' the Word πνεῦμα may ſometimes ſignify Anger, it is certain it does not uſually ſignify that; and therefore, unleſs the Context enforced it, it is not reaſonable to put ſuch an uncommon Signification upon it. But the chief Reaſon that makes me think this Interpretation of the Words not right, is, becauſe then this Beatitude, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*, would be in Senſe and Effect the very ſame with that other which follows in ℣. 5. *Bleſſed are the Meek*. For who are the Meek, but ſuch as are ſlow to Anger, ſuch as are not eaſily provoked, ſuch as are not apt to bear Malice, or to take Revenge; and, in a Word, ſuch as are of a quiet and peaceable Diſpoſition? So that if ſuch as theſe are alſo here meant by the *poor in Spirit*, here would be two of the eight Beatitudes (which our Saviour ſeems plainly to have deſign'd for ſo many diſtinct Heads of Duty, here would be two of them, I ſay) exactly the ſame; which, I think, is not reaſonably to be ſuppos'd.

Rejecting

Rejecting therefore theſe three Interpretations, I ſhall fix upon two others, which, tho' ſomewhat different from one another, may fairly be both ſuppos'd to be meant by our *Saviour* in this Place, by the *poor in Spirit*; namely, 1. Such as are *poor in Spirit*, *i. e.* are humble and lowly in their own Minds: And 2. Such as are, in all reſpects, of ſuch a Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind as is ſuitable to a State of Poverty; and conſequently how high ſoever their Condition in the World is, are careful to adorn themſelves with all thoſe Graces which are an Ornament to the Poor, and to practiſe all thoſe Virtues which a poor and low Condition in the World is moſt apt to inſtruct Men in, and to incite them to. *Poor in Spirit* may, I think, very properly ſignify either of theſe, *i. e.* either ſuch as have *Poverty of Spirit*, and they are the humble and lowly in Heart; or elſe ſuch as have *the Spirit of Poverty*, *i. e.* are of ſuch a Mind and Temper as is ſuitable to, and well becoming a State of Poverty. And of both theſe, what our *Saviour* ſays of

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the *poor in Spirit*, is true; *viz.* that *they are bleſſed*, and that *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

1. Then, I ſay, that by the *poor in Spirit*, may very properly be meant ſuch as are endu'd with Poverty or lowneſs of Spirit; *i. e.* ſuch as are humble in their own Minds, ſuch as have a mean and low Conceit of themſelves. For the word *Spirit* is often uſed for Height or Greatneſs of Mind, *i. e.* for Pride and Arrogance; and therefore *poor in Spirit* may very properly denote one that is free from Pride, one that is not high-minded; *i. e.* one that is humble and lowly. And,

Accordingly we often in Scripture meet with Expreſſions like to this, which are ſet to ſignify ſuch as are humble, and have a mean Senſe and Apprehenſion of themſelves; thus, *Prov.* xxix 23. *A Man's Pride ſhall bring him low, but Honour ſhall uphold the humble in Spirit.* And *Iſaiah* lxvi. 2. *To this Man will I look, ſaith the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.*

And

And there is an eaſy Reaſon to be given why this Temper of Mind ſhould be call'd Poverty of Spirit, *viz.* becauſe it is a Temper which Poverty or lowneſs of Condition does naturally bring a Man to, and which beſt ſuits that Eſtate: For tho' Pride be indeed unbecoming any Man, how high ſoever his Station, how plentiful ſoever his Eſtate be, becauſe no Man (if he rightly conſiders things) can have any thing to be proud of; yet of all Perſons it leaſt becomes ſuch as are poor and low in in the World.

And if we underſtand our *Saviour* in this Senſe, when he ſays, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*; the Virtue to which our *Saviour* annexes a Bleſſedneſs, and promiſes the Kingdom of Heaven, is an humble Opinion of our ſelves, and of all things belonging to us; the being little in our own Eſteem, the not thinking of our ſelves more highly than we ought to think; the not attributing to our ſelves any Excellencies or Perfections which we have not, nor over-rating and over-ruling thoſe we have, nor aſcribing to our ſelves the Glo-

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ry thereof; this is to be low in Heart, or, as our *Saviour* here expreſſes it, *poor in Spirit*; when our Modeſty is not feigned and pretended; when we do not endeavour to ſeem humble, but are ſo really; for Humility is not properly a Virtue of the Carriage, or of the Tongue, but of the Heart and Spirit.

But nevertheleſs, if we are really humble in Heart and Spirit, the Principle of Humility within us will moſt certainly ſhew forth it ſelf in the natural Fruits and Effects of Humility in the outward Carriage.

Particularly, if we are endu'd with true Humility of Mind, and have indeed a mean Opinion of our ſelves, we ſhall contentedly hear others ſpeak meanly and diſparagingly of us; we ſhall with Eaſe bear all the Affronts and Indignities that are put upon us; we ſhall readily ſubmit our Judgment to the Judgment of others, eſpecially of our Betters, and chuſe rather to obey than to command; we ſhall not greedily hunt after Honour and Applauſe from Men, but ſhall be well pleas'd to be thought

thought as little of by others as we think of our ſelves. And above all, being endu'd with this Poverty of Spirit, we ſhall, without any Reluctance, reſign up our Wills to God's, and readily ſubmit our ſelves both to do and to ſuffer his Pleaſure. This is to be *poor in Spirit*; as Poverty of Spirit is oppoſed to Pride and Haughtineſs of Spirit.

I proceed now, as I propos'd in the ſecond place,

2. To ſhew wherein conſiſts the preſent Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are thus *poor in Spirit*, and what will be their future Reward, and what Aſſurance they have that they ſhall be ſo bleſſed, and ſo rewarded. *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

1. I ſhall ſhew the preſent Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that are endu'd with this Humility of Mind; *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit.* And they are bleſſed above others in ſundry Reſpects.

(1.) They are bleſſed and happy above others, as being by this excellent Temper of Mind, and the lovely Fruits and Ef-

fects of it, rendred amiable and lovely to all that know them. For there is nothing that ſo adorns and ſets off a Man; nothing that ſo qualifies him for, and entitles him to Reſpect and Honour, as true Humility: Whence the *Apoſtle* calls it *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which*, as it is *of great Price in the Sight of God*, ſo it is in the Sight of *Men* too. Men naturally reverence thoſe who have mean Thoughts of themſelves; and on ſuch as do not hunt after Honour they are moſt ready and willing to beſtow Honour. *Honour ſhall uphold the humble in Spirit*, ſays the *wiſe Man*, Prov. xxix. 23. Whereas on the contrary, Arrogance and Haughtineſs of Mind, proud and contumelious Behaviour, inſtead of procuring Men Reſpect, naturally throw them into the Contempt and Hatred of all: Men love to croſs thoſe who are of ambitious and aſpiring Minds, and not to give them the Honour which they ſeek for, and ſet their Hearts upon.

(2.) Such humble-minded Men are alſo bleſſed above others, becauſe they are more

more at eaſe and quiet in their own Minds. Being of an humble Spirit, and thinking but meanly of themſelves, they are free from Ambition, Envy, Anger, and Revenge, and ſuch like boiſterous and troubleſome Paſſions; which render ſuch as are of an arrogant Mind, and greatly conceited of themſelves, and of their own Attainments, very uneaſy and unhappy in the midſt of all that Affluence of good things that the World can afford. An humble-minded Man, whatever his outward Condition and Circumſtances in the World are, is calm, contented, and thankful, and envies not the Condition of any who are plac'd above him: Whereas the proud and ambitious Man, as if all the World were made only for him, never thinks he has enough, or ſo much as he deſerves; and whatever Portion of worldly good things he has, can take no Comfort and Satisfaction therein, for the want of thoſe things which he has not: Or if (as *Haman* had) he has all the Plenty of worldly good things that his Heart can deſire; yet if there be but one *Mordecai*,

who will not bow the Knee to him, and do him that Reverence which he expects; this alone is ſufficient to diſcontent and diſquiet him. *All this* (ſays *Haman*, *Eſther*, v. 13. when he had been telling of all his Riches and Greatneſs; *All this availeth me nothing, ſo long as I ſee* Mordecai *the Jew ſitting at the King's Gate.*

(3.) The humble-minded Man, who has the Poverty of Spirit here ſpoken of, is alſo bleſſed above others, in this Reſpect, that he is in a better preparation and diſpoſition of Mind to receive and embrace the Goſpel, and to ſubmit himſelf to the Rules and Precepts of it.

And in this Senſe the Words following in the Text may be underſtood, *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; they are bleſſed, *becauſe theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; for it is evident that that Phraſe, *the Kingdom of Heaven*, is often in Scripture us'd in this Senſe, *viz.* to ſignify the Kingdom, *i.e.* the *Church* of *Chriſt*; the Company of his true Diſciples, which is made up of ſuch, and of ſuch only, as are of

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an humble Spirit: According to that of our *Saviour*, *Matth.* xviii. 4. *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* And again, *Chap.* xix. ℣. 14. *Suffer little Children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven: i. e.* None elſe are my true Diſciples, none elſe are the Subjects of my ſpiritual Kingdom, but they only who in their Innocency and Humility do reſemble little Children.

(4.) Another Inſtance of the preſent Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are thus *poor in Spirit*, is, that the Promiſe of Grace is made to them to guide and direct them in their way, and to aſſiſt them in the working out their Salvation. *God reſiſteth the Proud, but he giveth Grace unto the Humble*, ſays St. *James*, Jam. iv. 6. And *He ſcorneth the Scorners, but he giveth Grace unto the Lowly*, ſays the *wiſe Man*, *Prov.* iii. 34.

And now having ſeen what is the preſent Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are thus *poor in Spirit*, I proceed in the next Place

2. To ſee what will be their future Reward, and to ſhew the Claim and Title which ſuch have to the promiſe that is here made to them: *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e.* ſuch, and ſuch only, as are endu'd with this Poverty of Spirit, this Humility of Mind, have a Right and Title, by virtue of God's gracious Promiſe to the eternal Happineſs of the other World.

And the Certainty of this depends partly upon what has been ſaid already. For if none but ſuch are *Chriſt*'s true Diſciples, and Members of his Kingdom of Grace, then none but they can be Partakers of his Kingdom of Glory; *whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified*; and partly upon the many expreſs Promiſes of Heaven and eternal Happineſs, which are made to thoſe who are of this bleſſed Temper. *He that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted*; ſo we are told in general, by our

Saviour,

Saviour, *Luk.* xiv. 11. And, *learn of me*, ſays he again, *Matth.* xi. 29. *for I am meek, and lowly in Heart, and* ſo *ye ſhall find Reſt unto your Souls.*

And as the Happineſs of Heaven is peculiarly annex'd and promiſed to this Grace, ſo are the Degrees of Happineſs in Heaven to the ſeveral Meaſures and Degrees of it. The lowlier we are here in our own Thoughts and Opinion, the higher ſhall we be there in God's Favour, and our Crown will be ſo much the more glorious. For, *Whoſoever*, ſays our Lord, *ſhall humble himſelf as a little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Thus, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*; *i. e.* ſuch as are of an humble Spirit. In this World they are much better on't than others; for they live in greater Eſteem; they are better belov'd, and more reſpected; they are more at eaſe and quiet in their own Minds; they are alſo in a better diſpoſition for Virtue and Religion, and more fitly qualified to partake of the divine Grace; and after this Life is over

they ſhall be highly exalted, and be crown'd with Glory, and Honour, and Immortality. *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

That we therefore by Humility may be made capable of this Exaltation, God of his Mercy grant, for the Sake of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.*

To whom, &c.

THE

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE POOR in SPIRIT.

DISCOURSE II.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Poor in Spirit.

MATTH. v. 3.

Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

THIS is the beginning of our *Saviour*'s famous Sermon upon the Mount; and theſe Words contain the firſt of (thoſe commonly called) the eight Beatitudes. In diſcourſing on which, I have propoſed to obſerve this Method: Firſt, to ſhew who are the Perſons here ſpoken of, *the poor in Spirit*; and then, as I go along, to ſhew likewiſe wherein conſiſts their preſent Bleſſedneſs, and what will be their future.

And having already obſerv'd ſeveral Senſes wherein theſe Words have been expounded,

pounded; and having rejected, I think for good Reaſons, ſeveral Interpretations that have been given of them; I fixed on two, which I think may be both of them fairly admitted, altho' they are ſomewhat different from each other.

I. I told you, that by the *poor in Spirit* we may well underſtand ſuch as have what may be called *Poverty of Spirit*; that is, who are humble and lowly in their own Minds. And,

II. That we may alſo underſtand thereby ſuch as have the *Spirit of Poverty*; that is, who are of ſuch a Temper of Mind as is ſuitable to a State of Poverty.

Having therefore in a former Diſcourſe ſhew'd who are *poor in Spirit*, in the firſt Senſe, and wherein conſiſts their Bleſſedneſs, and what will be their Reward. I come now to ſhew likewiſe who are *poor in Spirit*, in the ſecond Senſe, and that there is a like Bleſſedneſs and Reward belonging to them alſo.

And he has the *Spirit of Poverty*, or a Spirit ſuitable to a State of Poverty, who whether he be poor or rich, or whatever his

his outward Circumſtances are, is of ſuch a Temper or Diſpoſition of Mind, with regard to Riches, and to all other things of this Life, whether good or evil, as they that be poor, are, or as it becomes thoſe that are poor to be; and who is conſequently careful to adorn himſelf with all thoſe Graces which are an Ornament to the poor, and to practiſe all thoſe Virtues, which a low Condition in the World is moſt apt to inſtruct Men in, and to incite them to.

For the farther Explication whereof it will therefore be needful to conſider, what are the proper Virtues of a poor and low Eſtate, what Virtues do beſt ſuit with, do beſt become a low and mean Condition; and then to ſhew that theſe ſame Virtues are alſo ſuch as every Man, of whatſoever State he is, high or low, rich or poor, is bound to endeavour after; and that, as greatly conducing both to his preſent, and to his future Felicity.

I. Then, One virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind, very well becoming a State of Poverty, is *Humility*; 'tis but fit that they who

who are low in the World, ſhould be likewiſe lowly in their own Minds; of all Perſons, Pride leaſt becomes ſuch; poor and proud do by no means agree together; it is not fit that the poor ſhould affect Greatneſs, or ſtrive to make a ſhew above their Fortune: It becomes them, above all others, to be eaſy in their Addreſs, and courteous and obliging to all whom they converſe with, and in all other reſpects to ſhew forth in their Carriage the Lowlineſs and Meekneſs of their Spirits.

And yet this Grace or Virtue of Humility, tho' it may be ſaid to be moſt proper to a State of Poverty, is not peculiar to that State only; for 'tis a Duty requir'd of all *Chriſtians*, to *learn* of their Maſter *Chriſt*, who was *meek and lowly in Heart*, *Matth.* xi. 29. and thoſe Words of our *Lord*, *Luk.* xxii. 26. are directed to ſuch of his Diſciples as were to be moſt of all advanc'd above others in this World. *The Kings of the Gentiles exerciſe Lordſhip over them,* ——— *but ye ſhall not be ſo; but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger; and he that*

that is chief, as he that doth ſerve.

And indeed (as the wiſe *Son* of *Syrach* obſerves *Eccluſ.* x. 18.) *Pride was not made for Man*; neither for one man nor for another; not for men of high Eſtate, any more than for Men of low Degree; for neither is the Matter wherein one Man may differ from another, in its ſelf, very conſiderable; nor if it were, would it be a juſt Reaſon of Pride; becauſe, whatever it is, it was the unmerited Gift of God, who *maketh poor, and maketh rich*, who *bringeth low, and lifteth up*; (1 *Sam.* ii. 7.) and can, and does, *out of the ſame Lump of Clay, make one Veſſel unto Honour, and another unto Diſhonour. Rom.* ix. 21. And 'tis well argu'd by the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not receiv'd it?*

Humility therefore, tho' it may be perhaps beſt learnt in a low Eſtate, is manifeſtly the Duty alſo of the rich. And bleſſed are they, whether they be poor or rich

rich, who have this *Spirit of the Poor*; that is, who have an humble opinion of themſelves, and of all things belonging to them; who are little in their own Eſteem, neither attributing to themſelves any Excellencies or Perfections which they have not, nor over-rating and over-valuing thoſe they have, nor aſcribing to themſelves the Glory thereof.

They are bleſſed above others, as being by this excellent Temper of Mind, and the lovely Fruits and Effects of it in the outward Carriage, rendred amiable and grateful to all who know them; for there is nothing that ſo adorns and ſets off a Man, nothing that ſo qualifies him for, and entitles him to Reſpect and Honour, as true Humility; whence the *Apoſtle* calls it, 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit*, which as it *is of great Price in the Sight of God*, ſo it is in the Sight of Men too; for Men naturally reverence thoſe who have mean Thoughts of themſelves; and on ſuch as do not hunt after Honour, they are moſt ready and willing to beſtow Honour.

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They are alſo bleſſed above others, becauſe they are more at eaſe and quiet in their own Minds; for being of a humble Spirit, and thinking but meanly of themſelves, they are free from Ambition, Envy, Anger, and Revenge, and all ſuch like boiſterous and turbulent Paſſions, which render the proud very uneaſy and unhappy in the greateſt Affluence of worldly good things. An humble-minded Man, whatever his outward Condition and Circumſtances in the World are, is calm, contented and thankful, and envies not the Condition of any who are plac'd above him; whereas the proud and ambitious Man, (as if all the World were made for him alone) never thinks he has enough, or ſo much as he deſerves; and whatever Portion of worldly good things he has, can take no Comfort or Satisfaction therein, for the want of thoſe things which he has not. Or if, (as *Haman* had) *Eſth.* v. 13. he has all the plenty of good things which his Heart can deſire, yet if there be but one *Mordecai* that will not bow the Knee to him, and do him that Reverence

which he expects, this alone is ſufficient to diſcontent and diſquiet him.

And as the humble in Mind are moſt bleſſed at preſent, ſo will they be alſo for ever; *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, ſuch, and ſuch only as have this *Spirit of Poverty*, this Humility of Mind, have a Right and Title, by virtue of God's gracious Promiſe, to the eternal Bleſſedneſs of the other World. *He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted*, *Matth.* xxiii. 12.

And as the Happineſs of Heaven is peculiarly annexed and promis'd to this Grace of Humility, ſo are alſo the Degrees of that Happineſs, to the ſeveral Meaſures and Degrees of this Grace; the lowlier we are here in our own Thought and Opinion, the higher ſhall we be there in God's Favour, and our Crown will be ſo much the more glorious. For, *Matth.* xviii. 4. *Whoſoever*, ſays our *Lord*, *ſhall humble himſelf as a little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. Another virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind very neceſſary to thoſe who are in a poor

a poor and low Eſtate, is *Patience.*

The Poor have need of Patience, becauſe this is one Evil uſually attending Poverty, and a greater Evil it is than Poverty it ſelf; that it expoſes Men to Scorn and Contempt, makes them ſubject to Indignities and Affronts, renders them liable to Abuſes and Injuries, which they, by reaſon of the ſcantineſs of their Fortune and want of Fricnds, are by no means able to fence off or avoid; and for what can't be avoided there's no Remedy but Patience. The poor therefore having ſuch need of Patience, 'tis very requiſite that they ſhould be endu'd with it; and the frequent Occaſions which they have to exerciſe it, will naturally put them upon endeavouring to learn it.

But Patience is a Virtue which every Man alſo has great need of, and will have frequent Occaſions for, the rich as well as the poor; *Job.* v. 7. *For Man is born unto Trouble as the Sparks fly upward.* There is indeed no State or Condition of Life free from Trouble; and it is impoſſible that while we live in a miſerable and

naughty World we ſhould meet with nothing in it to vex us. He that is above Contempt is the Object of Envy; and he that is not affronted to his Face may be ſlander'd behind his Back; and he that is too great to be cruſh'd or trampled upon by others, may yet ſuffer as great Miſchief by ſecret Treachery; and he that is powerful enough to reſiſt Violence, may not be wary enough to avoid a Snare.

Beſides; there are ſome Evils, and thoſe indeed the greateſt of human Life, which no Quality or Wealth does exempt Men from. For the rich Man as well as the poor may have unkind Relations, undutiful Children, falſe Friends, or unfaithful Servants; the rich, as well as the poor, may be diſappointed in his Deſigns, may be robb'd and ſpoil'd of what he has, may have a Body very ſickly and infirm, and may ſuffer the ſharpeſt Pains: And all theſe, and many more ſuch like Evils, which no Man is by any Wealth or Dignity exempted from, are Trials of our Patience, as well as thoſe which are more peculiarly incident to Poverty.

And

And bleſſed are they, whether rich or poor, who have this *Spirit of Poverty*; for they are plainly more bleſſed than others in their Afflictions, becauſe they are more eaſy under them; they are not gall'd and diſquieted ſo much by the Evils which befal them, as fretful and impatient Men are. They, tho' they are under the very ſame Affliction with others, yet being calm and quiet in their own Minds, being void of thoſe turbulent Paſſions which other Men in the like Calamity are ſubject to, ſuffer but half the Evil that other Men ſuffer.

And then this their Patience under their Sufferings conduces no leſs to their future Felicity; for the Evils and Calamities of this preſent Life are deſign'd by God as Trials of Men's Virtue, in which, if they acquit themſelves well, they are thereby entitled to the Reward of Virtue; that is, to the Happineſs of Heaven; and *theſe light Afflictions which are but for a Moment*, will *work for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.

III. Another virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind very requiſite in the Poor, is *Contentment* with their preſent Condition, a quiet Reſignation of themſelves to God's Will, a liking well thoſe Circumſtances which it has pleas'd the divine Providence to place them in. For the poor do want many of thoſe Conveniences of Life which the rich have; and therefore if they ſhould fret and vex themſelves for every thing that they could wiſh to have, but have not, they would be able to enjoy no Comfort in their Lives; if they ſhould murmur and complain againſt Providence, and take it ill at God's Hands that he gives them not every thing that they could deſire, their whole Life would be Murmuring and Complaint. The only way therefore for ſuch as are in a low Condition to be tolerably happy, is by bringing their Mind to their Condition, by perſuading themſelves to be ſatisfy'd with Neceſſaries, and by firmly believing that God orders all things for the beſt.

But as neceſſary as Contentment and Reſignation are to the poor, they are

no leſs the neceſſary Duties of the moſt Wealthy; 'tis every man's Duty, *in whatſoever State* he is *therewith to be content*, and in all things that befal him to ſubmit himſelf entirely to God's Will and Pleaſure.

Nay more; ſo far as we can judge from the beſt Obſervation that we can make, Contentment and Satisfaction of Mind is as neceſſary to be preach'd to and preſſed upon, and is as rarely practis'd by the rich, as the poor; for tho' their real Wants are not many, perhaps not any at all, yet their fancy'd and imaginary Wants are commonly more and greater than poor Men's are; and therefore if they ſet their Hearts upon every thing that they fancy, and are uneaſy in the want of every thing that they can think of to deſire, (which they often are) they will be as unhappy in their Abundance as the poor Man is in his Scarcity; nay indeed they will be more unhappy, notwithſtanding all their Plenty, than the poor Man is in his Want, even of many of the real Conveniences and Comforts of Life, in caſe they are not ſo

well contented and ſatisfied with their preſent Condition as the poor Man is.

But bleſſed are they who, whatever their Condition and Circumſtances in the World are, are endued with this *Spirit of Poverty*, that is, are eaſy, and pleas'd, and contented in their preſent State; who deſire no more than enough; who meekly reſign up themſelves to God to be diſpoſed of as he pleaſes, and believe that to be beſt which he orders. They who are of this Temper are happy in all Conditions, and they who have not this *Spirit of Poverty* can't be happy in any. For the Happineſs of *a Man's Life conſiſts not in the Abundance of the things that he poſſeſſes*, *Luke* xii. 15. But in the taſte and reliſh that he has of them, in the Satisfaction which he receives from them. He therefore who is contented, whatever his Condition be, is as happy as this World can make him, and much happier than all the World can make a Man to be who is of a diſcontented Spirit.

And as this *Spirit of Poverty* conduces thus to our preſent Happineſs, ſo it does

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no leſs to our future Felicity. They who are pleaſed with the Lot which God orders for them, have a kind of Heaven upon Earth, but their true Heaven is reſerv'd for another Life; when all their Wiſhes ſhall be accompliſh'd, and all their Deſires fulfill'd; when they ſhall be fully ſatisfied with what they have, becauſe they ſhall have all that can be deſir'd; for they ſhall enjoy him who is the Fountain of all Good, *in whoſe Preſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore. Pſal.* xvi. 11.

IV. Another virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind well becoming ſuch as are of poor and low Eſtate in the World, is *Truſt* and *Hope* in God. They that have Riches are very apt to put Confidence in their Wealth; and they that have many and powerful Friends (as the rich uſually have) are apt to rely much upon them, and to expect great Help and Succour from them; and they that are very high advanc'd in the World are apt to imagine that their own Greatneſs will ſecure them from all Miſchief. But what can the poor do, who

who have neither Money, nor Friends, nor Authority, nor Power? What have they to truſt to, or rely upon? Why truly nothing but God. In him they may hope, and from him they may expect Help; and if they have it not from him, they can look for it from none elſe. And becauſe they have nothing elſe to truſt to, they are commonly in a readier Diſpoſition of Mind than others are, to place their Hope and Confidence in God.

But this likewiſe, tho' it be a Virtue that is beſt taught by Poverty, is nevertheleſs a Duty incumbent upon all; and accordingly the *Apoſtle* commands *Timothy*, (1 *Tim.* vi. 17) to *charge* even *them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded*, and that they do *not truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the living God.*

And bleſſed are they, whether they be poor or rich, who have this *Spirit of the poor.*

They are bleſſed now, becauſe what they truſt to will not fail them, as all other things that Men are apt to put Confidence

fidence in may, and oftentimes do; they know on whom they have believed, and have experienc'd his Goodneſs, and are certain that he can't be worſe than his Promiſe. *Bleſſed are all they that put their Truſt in him*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. ii. 12. for *none of them that truſt in him ſhall be deſolate*, Pſal. xxxiv. 22.

Nor is the Bleſſedneſs of ſuch confin'd to this Life only; but *theirs* alſo *is the Kingdom of Heaven.* For God never fails them that put their Truſt in him; and this is what all good Men do truſt him for, not only that he will take Care of, and provide for them in this Life, but that he will alſo beſtow upon them a better Life. They believe that all his Promiſes will be made good; and *having this Hope*, they endeavour to *purify themſelves even as he is pure*, 1 *Joh.* iii. 3. And this Faith, ſo influencing their Practice, will be *counted to them* (as it was to *Abraham*) *for Righteouſneſs*; and they (as he was) ſhall be *called the Friends of God*; and after this Life is over, ſhall be admitted *to ſit down*

down with Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

V. Other Virtues taught by a State of Poverty (which I mention together, as being nearly related, and grounded on the ſame Reaſons) are *Induſtry*, *Temperance*, and *Frugality*.

They that want for nothing may think it needleſs to labour; and they that have more than enough, are very apt to uſe too much; and they that know no end of their Wealth, may be tempted to be careleſs and laviſh in their Expences; but the poor Man muſt labour, becauſe he cannot live without Labour; he muſt be temperate, becauſe he can't afford himſelf more of any thing than is neceſſary; and he muſt be frugal and ſaving, becauſe otherwiſe the Fruit of his Labour will not be ſufficient to anſwer all his neceſſary Occaſions. Theſe therefore being Virtues which the poor are in a manner forc'd to by Neceſſity, may well be call'd Virtues of Poverty; and they conſequently may well be ſaid to have the *Spirit of Poverty*, who, not being under the ſame Neceſſity, do practiſe

ctiſe the ſame Virtues by Choice.

And indeed theſe are all ſuch Virtues as the rich, no leſs than the poor, are bound in Duty to practiſe, altho' they are not ſo much forc'd to it by Neceſſity.

For firſt, as to *Induſtry*; even he that has enough already for all his neceſſary Occaſions, is not however allow'd by God to ſpend his Time, or any great Portions of it, in Idleneſs, but is bound to employ himſelf in ſome Buſineſs that may render him uſeful to the World.

And then, as to *Temperance*; he that has more than he has need to uſe, is not for that Reaſon permitted to live in Luxury and Exceſs, or to be intemperate in the uſe of any worldly Good.

And laſtly, as to *Frugality*; even he that has the moſt of all is nevertheleſs oblig'd to be frugal and husbandly, and not to laviſh or ſquander away what he has; becauſe what he has is not his own, but is only a Talent committed to his Truſt by his great Maſter, of which he muſt one Day give an account. And if that Servant in the Goſpel was condemn'd only

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for hoarding up his Talent, for not uſing it as he ought to have done; *Matth.* xxv. 30. *Luk.* xix. 20. much rather would he have receiv'd the ſame, or greater Condemnation, if he had fool'd and ſquander'd it away.

So that, we ſee, theſe Virtues, *Induſtry*, *Temperance*, and *Frugality*, tho' they are ſuch Virtues as Poverty does moſt naturally teach, are nevertheleſs the Duties of all; and that the rich, as well as the poor, are oblig'd to be thus *poor in Spirit*.

And there is both a preſent Bleſſedneſs and a future Reward belonging to all thoſe who diligently practiſe theſe Virtues, of whatſoever Condition they are.

For 1*ſt*, As to *Induſtry*: Whether a Man be rich or poor; it is for his Eaſe and Delight to have ſomething to do, to have ſome Buſineſs to paſs away his Time; mere Idleneſs being more tedious even than hard Labour.

And then, as to *Temperance*; it is likewiſe no leſs for a Man's own Advantage, whether he be rich or poor, to be tempe-

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rate in all things: For by this means his Body is kept in Health and Vigour, and his Soul is beſt able to exerciſe its intellectual Faculties; by this means he eſcapes many ſore Pains and Diſeaſes, which are the natural Fruits of Luxury and Intemperance, and which cut ſhort the Lives of a great many, in the midſt of their Days.

And laſtly, The rich no leſs than the poor will find their preſent Advantage in a *frugal* and wiſe *Management* of what they have; for extreme Poverty is not oftner the Effect of Idleneſs, than it is of ill Husbandry and Prodigality; and it rarely fails but that he who can't learn the Virtue of Frugality, while he is in a wealthy and proſperous Condition, is forc'd to learn it afterwards by thoſe Straits and Neceſſities which his Careleſneſs and Profuſeneſs do in a ſhort time reduce him to.

And as theſe Virtues of Poverty do thus conduce to our preſent Happineſs, ſo do they likewiſe to our future Advantage. For,

Firſt, The *induſtrious* and *laborious* Man, who ſuffers no Time to paſs idle, who

who has always ſome honeſt Buſineſs to employ himſelf in, does by that eſcape a great many Temptations, which he would not find it ſo eaſy to reſiſt as it is to avoid. And indeed, conſidering the Weakneſs of our Nature, and how prone we are to Sin, the beſt Security that any of us have that we ſhall not fall into a Sin, is by avoiding as much as is poſſible all Temptations to it.

The Practice of *Temperance* likewiſe is an excellent Preparation for a future Life. For he who has accuſtomed himſelf to uſe no more of thoſe Proviſions which God deſign'd for the Suſtenance of our Bodies, in this frail and periſhing State, than is needful for that purpoſe; he who has not allow'd himſelf to eat or drink for Pleaſure, but only for his neceſſary Suſtenance; he who while he was in this Body did not uſe to gratify his Palate and his Senſes; when he ſhall come to have a purify'd and ſpiritual Body, (ſuch as we ſhall have at the Reſurrection) a Body that will ſuffer no decay, and conſequently will need no ſuſtenance or recruit; will then

then have no longing or hankering after Meats or Drinks, or corporeal Pleaſures, but will delight to live as do the Angels, becauſe he had us'd himſelf to live ſo here as much as poſſibly he could; and had rather, if he could have done it, have liv'd without thoſe ſordid Pleaſures wherein ſenſual Men place their only Felicity.

And laſtly, *Frugality* likewiſe, or a wiſe and prudent Management of thoſe worldly good things which we have, tho' it may ſeem a Virtue that is profitable only for this Life, is yet in truth a Virtue that does no leſs conduce to our future Happineſs. For we are not (as was ſaid before) the Proprietors of thoſe things which we poſſeſs, but only Stewards; and we are then faithful in our Stewardſhip, when we do not laviſh away, but huſband well what is committed to our truſt; when we do not ſpend it idly, but improve it to our Maſter's Honour, or lay it out in ſuch ways as he has directed. *Who*, ſays our Saviour, *Luk.* xii. 43. *is that faithful and wiſe Steward, whom his Lord ſhall make Ruler over his Houſ-*

hold, to give them their portion of Meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.

VI. Another virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind, very requiſite to the poor, and which a mean and low Condition in the World is very apt to work Men to, is a *Contempt of the World*; an Indifference of Mind towards it, and a Willingneſs to part with it. They who live in Eaſe and Plenty, and meet with no Croſſes or Diſappointments, can hardly forbear ſaying, with the *Apoſtles*, *It is good for us to be here.* And there is no Thought more melancholick and unpleaſant to them, than to conſider that it will not be long before they muſt be forced to leave that Condition of Life with which they are ſo much pleas'd. *O Death*, ſays the wiſe Son of *Syrach*, Eccluſ. xli. 1. *how bitter is the Remembrance of thee, to a Man that liveth at Reſt in his Poſſeſſions, unto the Man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath Proſperity in all things?*

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But there is plainly no Reaſon that the Poor ſhould be thus fond of this World, or ſo loth to go out of it. For what is all their Life here but Labour and Sorrow? They toil and take Pains, they riſe early and work late, and, after all, can but juſt make a hard Shift to live; their Fare, after all, is but ſlender, their Accommodations but mean; ſcarcely can they get enough for neceſſary Uſes, much leſs can they make Proviſion for Pleaſure and Delight. What is there then in this Condition of Life that can reaſonably make Men very deſirous to continue long in it, or unwilling to exchange it for the better?

Who is there that delights to be at an Inn? Even tho' he has the beſt Accommodations that the Houſe affords? But if his Lodging be cold or uneaſy, and his Diet coarſe; and either there are no Conveniences to be had in the Houſe, or he has not wherewithal to purchaſe them; this muſt needs make him ſtill more indifferent; or rather, it muſt needs make him more deſirous to ſtay there as little a while as is poſſible, and to make all the haſte he can

Home, where he hopes he ſhall find things much more to his liking.

Such a Temper of Mind, with regard to this World, being therefore what a State of Poverty is apt to bring Men to; whoever is of the ſame Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind, of whatſoever Condition he be, may well be ſaid to have the *Spirit of the Poor*.

And indeed, whatſoever Condition we are of, it is highly reaſonable that we ſhould be of this Spirit; for in truth we are all but Strangers and Pilgrims here; we came from a better Place, and we hope we ſhall go thither again; and tho' while we abide here, ſome of us perhaps may be better accommodated than others are, yet ſtill we are but as in an Inn, where the greateſt Conveniences are more than over-balanc'd by the Inconveniences; and when we ſhall be come home to our Father's Houſe, it will be much better with us all than it can be here. Why then ſhould we be deſirous to ſtay here? Why ſhould we be fond of Life? Why, if we are in a proſperous Condition, ſhould we

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ſet our Hearts upon, or place our Happineſs in a ſhort-liv'd Pleaſure? Or why, if we are afflicted, ſhould we be much vex'd and diſquieted by the Uneaſineſs of a Moment? It will be better for us all, if it be not through our own Fault, (it will be better I ſay) even with thoſe of us who are the moſt proſperous, when we ſhall leave this World, than it can be while we continue in it? Why then ſhould we ſet our Affections upon any thing here? Why rather do we not let our *Heart be there where our* true *Treaſure is*, and endeavour to ſit as looſe as we can from this World, which we muſt ſo ſoon go out of? And to this Purpoſe we are exhorted by the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 29, *&c.* (and his Exhortation is general, reſpecting all Perſons alike, the rich, no leſs than the poor) *This I ſay, Brethren, the Time is ſhort; it remaineth that both they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not, and they that uſe this*

World as not abuſing it: For the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away. Such an Indifference of Mind towards this World well becomes us all, whatever our Condition is, conſidering what a very ſhort while we have to ſtay here.

And this Virtue alſo, no leſs than the others before mention'd, conduces very much both to our preſent, and to our future Bleſſedneſs.

Firſt, There is a preſent Bleſſedneſs belonging to thoſe who are of this Temper. For he who has no great Opinion of the World, or of any thing in it, can't be very eager in his Deſire after it; for why ſhould he very earneſtly deſire what he does not believe would make him much happier? And the fewer things we deſire, the eaſier we are, and the leſs liable to Diſappointment.

And indeed this is the great Unhappineſs of all thoſe, who place their Affections upon this World, that they will certainly fail of their Expectation; for either they will not be able to attain to that Condition of Life, which they promis'd themſelves

ſelves ſo much Happineſs in, or elſe they will not meet with that great Satisfaction therein which they expected from it. And *Hope deferred maketh the Heart ſick*, as the *wiſe Man* ſays, *Prov.* xiii. 12. It muſt needs be a great Vexation to a Man to miſs of a thing after he has taken a great deal of pains for it; Or if he ſhould obtain it, it will be yet a greater Vexation to find that it is not ſuch a thing as he took it for, but that it has rather more Evil in it than Good. And ſuch are all the things of this World; *all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, as *Solomon* truly obſerves, *Eccleſ.* i. 14. They promiſe much Satisfaction, but they yield none: And commonly they that have the moſt of this World have likewiſe the moſt Trouble.

He therefore is plainly the happieſt Man who is *poor in Spirit*, who ſets not his Mind upon Vanity, upon things that will not ſatisfie; ſuch an one is above the reach of Fortune, and will be little concern'd how the World goes; becauſe go it as it will, he has little Intereſt in it; much he

expects not to gain, and much he can't loſe; and being thus moderately affected towards this World, and knowing that Happineſs can't be had here below, as he will not be much lifted up, ſo neither can he be much caſt down or overwhelm'd with Grief, at any thing which happens to him here; he will bear all Changes of Fortune with an even Mind and a contented Spirit. And this indeed is a great Felicity, to be able to bear well thoſe Troubles which in a troubleſome World it is impoſſible we ſhould eſcape.

But the greateſt Bleſſedneſs of ſuch as have their Affections thus wean'd from this World is in Reverſion; *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* If we *ſet* our *Affections on things above and not on things of the Earth*, and *ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right Hand of God*, then *when Chriſt who is our Life ſhall appear, we alſo ſhall appear with him in Glory*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *Coloſſ.* iii. 1, 2.

And to confirm and eſtabliſh our Faith in the Truth of this Promiſe it may be farther

farther consider'd, that such as these have a Title, not only by Promise, but likewise in Equity to the Happiness that is here promis'd. I mean this, that considering the Goodness of God, there seems to be a Congruity, a sort of Equity in it, that every Man should have his Portion of good things as well as of evil things, some time ot other, here or hereafter, in this World or in the next. And this seems to be the Ground of that Answer which in the *Parable of the rich Man and Lazarus*, *Luk.* xvi. 25. *Abraham* makes to the rich Man in Hell, when he had desired some Abatement of his Torment. *Son*, says *Abraham*, *remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.*

Forasmuch therefore as they; whether they be rich or poor, who are endued with this *Spirit of the poor*, (having a Mind weaned from this World, and all the Enjoyments of Sense,) do not value much these worldly good things, nor place their Happiness therein; it seems congruous and

and agreeable, that they ſhould have ſome other Happineſs, which is more ſuited and adequate to their Deſires, or elſe they would be in worſe Condition and more unhappy than other Men. And ſuch a Happineſs there is provided for them, a Happineſs pure and unmix'd, a Joy yielding full Satisfaction, as great as we can deſire, and far greater than we can now conceive; *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

VII. Laſtly; Another virtuous Diſpoſition of Mind which Poverty of State or a low Condition in the World is naturally apt to work in Men, is a *pitiful* and *compaſſionate Temper.*

The poor are liable to more Pains and Sufferings in the World than others; they are ſometimes hungry and have nothing to eat, thirſty and have nothing to drink, are cold and have not Raiment enough to keep themſelves warm, are pinch'd with the Weather, and have no Houſe to ſhelter themſelves in: theſe and the like Evils they have often been forc'd to ſuffer, and they know by Experience how hard it is to be without the Accommodations of Life;

Life; having therefore been in this diſconſolate Condition themſelves, they are naturally apt to have Compaſſion upon others, when they ſee them in the like Condition. So that Compaſſion upon others in Diſtreſs may well be reckon'd one of the Virtues of Poverty, or a Virtue which Poverty is moſt apt to teach; and conſequently, whoever is of a compaſſionate Temper may be ſaid to have the *Spirit of the poor*.

But though this be a Virtue beſt taught by Poverty, it is what Men in all Conditions, the rich as well as the poor, are bound to learn and practiſe. For it is the Duty of all Men, as being all Members of the ſame Body, to have a fellow-feeling of the Sufferings of any other Part or Member of the Body. *Whether*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. xii. 26. *one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it. Now ye are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular.* But though all are alike oblig'd to have Pity on others in Diſtreſs, all cannot

not make the like Expreſſions of their Pity. For they who are poor themſelves can only commiſerate the Wants of other poor, but it is not in their Power to relieve them; they can only *weep with thoſe that weep*, but they cannot eaſe them of their Sorrow; whereas the rich have it in their Power to do well, as well as to wiſh well, to ſuch as are in Want and Diſtreſs. It is their Part therefore not only to give good Words and good Wiſhes, but more ſubſtantial Comfort; not only to *ſay to a Brother or Siſter that is naked, and deſtitute of daily Food, depart in Peace; be ye warmed and filled*, but to *give them thoſe things which are needful for the Body*, Jam. ii. 15.

And bleſſed are they who have this *Spirit of the poor*; that is, who are of ſuch a pitiful and compaſſionate Temper as Poverty is apt to teach; who, altho' in Proſperity themſelves, are yet as ready to relieve the Wants and Neceſſities of others, as Men in the like Afflictions and Adverſities would be, if they were able.

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They are bleſſed even at preſent; for as our *Saviour* was uſed to ſay, *Acts* xx. 35. *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* There is certainly more Pleaſure in doing Kindneſſes than in receiving them; for the Pleaſure of receiving a Kindneſs is a ſenſual Pleaſure, conſiſting in the eaſing of that Pain which the Man was before in, and it is (as all other ſenſual Pleaſures are) of ſhort Continuance; for a Man may be little the better now for a Kindneſs which was done him ſome while ago. But the Pleaſure of doing Good is chiefly a Pleaſure of the Mind, procuring great Joy and Delight, not only at the time when we do the Kindneſs, but whenever after we reflect upon what we have done.

They that are of this pitiful and compaſſionate Temper, and ſhew forth the ſame as they have Ability and Opportunity, in Acts of Mercy and Charity, are alſo bleſſed at preſent; becauſe they are entitled to the Bleſſing of God upon all that they take in Hand, who does commonly, even in this Life, render to them an hundred fold in temporal Bleſſings, for

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the Kindneſs which they ſhew to others in Diſtreſs. *Bleſſed is he*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. xli. 1, 2, 3. *that conſidereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the Will of his Enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the Bed of Languiſhing, thou wilt alſo make all his Bed in his Sickneſs.* And, *He*, ſays *Solomon*, Prov. xix. 17. *that hath Pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

But the chief Bleſſedneſs of theſe *poor in Spirit* is alſo in Reverſion; *Bleſſed* are they who have this *Spirit of Poverty, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; there are none ſo ſure to receive Mercy from God at the great Day, as they who in this Life ſhew Mercy to others in Diſtreſs. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory*,——ſays our *Saviour*, Matth. xxv. 31, *&c. before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations——and he ſhall ſet the Sheep*

on

on his right Hand, and the Goats on his left;——and ſhall ſay unto them on his right Hand, come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in Priſon, and ye came unto me.——For inaſmuch as ye have done theſe things to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done them unto me.

By this Account of the Proceedings at the great Day of Judgment, it ſhould ſeem as if nothing would be then enquir'd into, but only whether we have had this *Spirit of Poverty*; that is, whether we have been pitiful and compaſſionate to the poor and needy, and others in Diſtreſs, and have been free and liberal in our Bounty towards them. But tho' this be not ſo, (for we are told in other Places, that *God will* then *bring every Work into Judgment)* yet I think it may be fairly argu'd from

from hence, that at the great Day of Reckoning ſpecial regard will be had to the Diſcharge of this Duty; that tho' this alone will not be ſufficient to entitle us to the Reward of Heaven, the want of it alone will be ſufficient to forfeit our Title to it; according to that of St. *James*, Jam. ii. 13. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath ſhewed no Mercy*; and that tho' this alone will not qualify us for the Kingdom of Heaven, it is one of the moſt neceſſary Qualifications for it.

I ſhall only add, for the Concluſion of all; that altho' the Virtues and Graces before-mention'd, (and if there be any other of the like kind, which, becauſe moſt readily learn'd, or moſt eaſily practis'd in a low Condition, may be call'd Virtues of Poverty) are, as has been ſhewn before, alike neceſſary to Men of all Conditions, in order to the rendring their Lives here eaſy, and to qualify them for the Kingdom of Heaven; yet, when they are found in Perſons of nobler Birth, of higher Quality, and of more plentiful Eſtates, they ſhine with greater Luſtre, and ſo become

come more exemplary to the reſt of the World. For which Reaſon, and eſpecially becauſe they are commonly with more Difficulty learn'd and exercis'd by ſuch Perſons, than by Men of meaner Rank; as they are in them more excellent and praiſe-worthy than in others; ſo, it may well be thought, they will alſo be rewarded with higher Degrees of Glory.

Thus, *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit*, or they who have the Spirit of Poverty, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Which Bleſſedneſs, that we may all attain, God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *to whom with the* Father, *and the* Holy Ghoſt, *be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever.* Amen.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE Mourners in Affliction.

DISCOURSE III.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Mourners in Affliction.

MATTH. v. 4.

Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.

THIS is the ſecond of the eight Beatitudes, containing (in the Opinion of the World) a very ſtrange Paradox, or rather a moſt palpable Untruth; for it pronounces thoſe happy, who, to all Appearance, are the moſt wretched and miſerable Men upon the Face of the Earth: *Bleſſed are they that mourn.* For if ſuch as mourn be happy, who (will the Men of the World ſay) are then unhappy? Is it better to be ſad and mournful, than to be gay and pleaſant? Are Tears ſweeter than Smiles?

And is Sorrow rather to be choſen than Joy? Believe this (will they ſay) who liſts; but it can never enter into our Heart, to give Credit to ſuch evident Contradictions.

'Twas thought a very wild and extravagant Fancy in the *Stoicks*, when they taught that Pain was an indifferent thing, neither good nor bad; and that their wiſe Man might be happy, altho' he were in very ill Circumſtances in the World; but yet they did not go quite ſo far as this, they did not affirm that he was the happier for his being in ſuch ill Circumſtances, and that if his outward Condition in the World had been better than it was, he would not have been quite ſo happy as he was now: But now this is the Paradox advanced here by our *Saviour*; not only that a Mourner may be bleſſed, but that his mourning contributes to make him ſo; that he is bleſſed, becauſe he mourns: *Bleſſed are they that mourn.*

But as ſtrange a Paradox as this may ſeem at the firſt ſight, it is nevertheleſs a moſt true Affirmation; for 'twas utter'd by one

one who well knew what he ſaid, and could ſpeak in this Caſe by his own Experience, being himſelf *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*; 'twas utter'd by one who could not be miſtaken in what he affirmed, being the *Wiſdom of the Father*; and laſtly, 'twas utter'd by one who could not deceive or impoſe upon his Hearers by a Falſhood, being Truth it ſelf; *for I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, ſays he, *Joh.* xiv. 6. Moſt certain it is, therefore, that theſe Words of our *Saviour* are true, *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; the only Doubt will be, in what Senſe they are true; *i.e.* who are the Mourners that he here ſpeaks of, and wherein their Bleſſedneſs does conſiſt.

And therefore theſe two ſhall be the chief Heads of my following Diſcourſe upon the Words.

I. I ſhall enquire who are the Mourners which our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of. And

II. I ſhall ſhew what is the Bleſſedneſs which belongs to them as ſuch; *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

I. I ſhall enquire who are the Mourners which our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of, *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; and thereby may be meant either

1. Such as are in a very ſad and ſorrowful Condition in the World; *i.e.* who have a great ſhare of Troubles and Afflictions in this Life; or elſe,

2. Such as do afflict and grieve themſelves, and are full of Sorrow and Trouble in their own Minds, upon the account of their Sins, which lie as a heavy Load upon them, and make them (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of himſelf) to *go mourning all the Day long*.

Now which of theſe Mourners it was, that our *Saviour* here meant, I cannot be certain; for I find Commentators, both ancient and modern, (all that I have look'd into) much divided about it; and the Words of the Text are fairly capable of either Interpretation, and, I think, as fairly of one as of the other. And therefore ſeeing both Interpretations are (ſo far as I can judge) alike probable, and the Words are true in which ſoever of theſe Senſes

Senſes we underſtand them; I ſee no Reaſon why we ſhould ſo embrace one Senſe, as to exclude the other: But I think 'tis more reaſonable in ſuch a Caſe as this, to follow the Advice, which, I remember, the judicious Biſhop *Sanderſon* ſomewhere gives, and calls a piece of *ſpiritual good Husbandry*; *viz.* to admit both Interpretations, for as much as they are not only both true, but alſo very well conſiſtent together.

1. Then, I ſay, that by the Mourners whom our *Saviour* here pronounces bleſſed, and to whom he here makes a Promiſe of Comfort, he might mean ſuch as are in a ſad and ſorrowful Condition in the World, who meet with a great many Troubles and Afflictions in it; thus (as I obſerved before) our *Saviour* himſelf is ſaid to have been *a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief* by reaſon of thoſe low and hard Circumſtances which he appeared in the World in, and thoſe cruel and bitter Sufferings which he underwent; and therefore, by the ſame Reaſon, they who are made conformable to him in Sufferings, may,

may, in proportion to their Sufferings, be likewiſe ſtyled *Men of Sorrows*, or *Mourners*.

And that theſe were the Perſons here meant by our *Saviour*, is argued very probably from *Luke* vi. 21. where our Lord, pronouncing the ſame Bleſſedneſs to them that *weep now*, oppoſes to them thoſe that *laugh*; *i. e.* thoſe who live in all manner of worldly Proſperity; and having nothing to grieve or vex them, do paſs away their Life here in Mirth and Jollity. And in the ſame Senſe our *Saviour* plainly uſes theſe Phraſes, in *Joh.* xvi. 20. where, foretelling the Hardſhips and Perſecutions which ſhould befal his Diſciples, after he was gone from them, he thus expreſſeth himſelf; *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoice; and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy.* By which Phraſes, *ye ſhall weep and lament*, and *ye ſhall be ſorrowful*, he means the ſame that he does in the laſt Verſe of that Chapter, when he tells them that *in the World* they ſhould

have

have Tribulation, *i.e.* that their State and Condition in the World, as to their outward Circumſtances, ſhould be very ſad and calamitous; that they ſhould meet with abundance of Croſſes and Afflictions; that they ſhould endure much Hardſhip; that they ſhould ſuffer great Pains; ſo that in the Eye of the World their Condition ſhould be very deplorable, and they ſhould be thought of all Men the moſt miſerable.

And what was the Lot of the Diſciples is generally (in great meaſure) the Lot of all good Men; things rarely happen ſo well to them in this World as they do to the wicked; their Circumſtances are generally poorer and lower, they uſually fare harder, they commonly ſuffer more than other Men do.

And this is ſo notoriouſly true, that it has been taken notice of in all Ages; and it has been one of the grand Objections which atheiſtical Men have mov'd againſt the Being and Providence of God, *Cur bonis malè?* If there be indeed a wiſe, a juſt, and a good God, who ſuperintends and governs all the Affairs of the World, how comes it to paſs that the beſt Men,

and

and conſequently ſuch as ought to be beſt beloved, and moſt cared for by God, do yet commonly fare the worſt?

And as this Event has been a Stone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of offence, at which many wicked Men have fallen; ſo it has often occaſioned even the beſt and wiſeſt of Men to ſtumble at it; and has raiſed ſuch Doubts and Scruples in their Minds concerning the divine Providence, as they knew not well how to anſwer and get rid of: For thus the holy *Pſalmiſt* confeſſes of himſelf, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 2. *As for me, my Feet were almoſt gone, my Steps had well nigh ſlipp'd; for I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the Proſperity of the wicked.* —— *Behold theſe are the ungodly*, ſays he, (℣. 12.) *who proſper in the World; they increaſe in Riches. Verily, I have cleanſed my Heart in vain, and waſhed my Hands in Innocency; for all the Day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every Morning.*

Thus, I ſay, it has been generally the Lot of good Men in all Ages, as well as it was of the Apoſtles and Diſciples of our Lord,

Lord, to *weep*, and *lament*, while the World did *rejoice*; it has been commonly their Fate to fare hardlier, and to endure more Croſſes than other Men; ſo that if all Mankind were to be divided, and diſtinguiſh'd into two Companies, it would be much the ſame in effect, whether we diſtinguiſhed them by their outward Circumſtances, placing the afflicted on one ſide, and the proſperous on the other; or whether we diſtinguiſhed them by their inward moral Qualifications, placing the good by themſelves, and the bad by themſelves: Some little Differences indeed there might be, ſome few Exceptions on either ſide, but in the main, the Diſtribution would be the ſame either way; the wicked and proſperous would be one Company, and the good and afflicted would be another Company. So that by the *Mourners*, whom our *Saviour* here pronounces bleſſed, we are plainly to underſtand, that Company of good Men who have their Portion of good things reſerved for another Life, and have their evil things here in this World; I ſay, they are ſuch

Mourners

Mourners as theſe only, whom our Lord pronounces bleſſed; *bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*; for it is not their ſad and mournful Condition in the World, ſimply conſider'd, which makes them bleſſed; they are not more bleſſed, merely becauſe they are more miſerable here than other Men; but 'tis becauſe being good Men, they bear their Croſſes and Misfortunes with a Chriſtian Patience, and a cheerful Reſignation of themſelves to God's Will, and becauſe they are the better for them. Thoſe ſame Afflictions, and worldly Misfortunes, which befalling a wicked Man, would be ſufficicient to render him extremely miſerable; befalling a good Man, and one who makes a right uſe of them, do not only not render him unhappy, (he may be bleſſed even in the midſt of them) but they do in ſome meaſure contribute to the Increaſe of his Happineſs; he is upon this very account rather more bleſſed than he would be otherwiſe. *Bleſſed*, ſays our *Saviour*, *are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

And

And thus now having ſhewn who are the Mourners which our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of, namely, thoſe good Men who fare hardly and live meanly, and meet with a great many Croſſes and Afflictions in this Life; I proceed, in the ſecond place,

II. To ſhew what is the Bleſſedneſs which belongs to them as ſuch, and what will be their future Reward. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

In which Words there is a double Bleſſedneſs affirm'd to belong to ſuch Mourners; one, at preſent; *bleſſed are they that mourn*; and another in reverſion, when their Sorrow ſhall be turn'd into Joy, and all Tears ſhall be wiped away from their Eyes; *they ſhall be comforted.*

1. I ſay, there is a preſent Bleſſedneſs which belongs to ſuch Mourners; *Bleſſed are they that mourn.* Their Condition, even in the midſt of all their worldly Croſſes and Afflictions, is not ſo very ſad and uncomfortable as it appears to others to be; their Condition, even then, is better, and rather to be choſen, than that of the

the moſt proſperous Sinners; ſo far are theſe worldly Adverſities and Tribulations from rendring them unhappy, that they do rather conduce even to their preſent, as well as to their future Happineſs. *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; *i. e.* they are bleſſed even whilſt they mourn, and they are happy Men notwithſtanding that ſad and afflicted Condition which they are oftentimes in.

And this preſent Bleſſedneſs of good Men, even while under the ſoreſt Affiicti-ons, ariſes partly from their Senſe of God's Love and Goodneſs to them, in ſending Afflictions upon them; partly from the Comforts and Supports of God's Spirit, whereby they are enabled to bear them; and partly from the manifold Benefits and Advantages which they do reap from them.

1. From their Senſe of Gods Love and Goodneſs to them in ſending theſe worldly Afflictions upon them; this I ſay, ſerves in great meaſure to render them happy in that ſad and mournful Eſtate, which they are in by reaſon of their worldly Adverſities,

ſities, that they are perſuaded, that temporal Afflictions are no certain Sign of God's Hatred and Diſpleaſure, but rather of his Love and Kindneſs to the Perſon afflicted; they know that it has been the Lot of good Men in all Ages, to ſuffer Tribulation, and to meet with many Croſſes and Misfortunes in this Life, and that there is ſcarcely any more certain diſtinguiſhing Mark of God's Children than this: They know that our *Saviour Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, the only begotten of the Father, and his well beloved Son in whom he was well pleaſed, drank deepeſt of this bitter Cup, and that there hath been no Perſon before or ſince who hath been dear to God, who hath not in ſome meaſure drunk of it: Thus he dealt with his own People the *Jews*, becauſe he had a greater Love to them than to other People, therefore he kept them under harder and ſeverer Diſcipline, while he ſuffered other People to follow the Bent of their own Inclinations, without check or controul: *Thou ſhalt remember*, (ſays *Moſes*, *Deut.* viii. 2.) *all the Way which the Lord thy*

God led thee theſe forty Years in the Wilderneſs, to humble thee and to prove thee; and he humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, ——that he might make thee know that Man doth not live by Bread only, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord doth Man live; —— ℣. 5. *Thou ſhalt alſo conſider in thine Heart, that as a Man chaſteneth his Son, ſo the Lord thy God chaſteneth thee.*

And this hath been the uſual Method of God's dealing with all his Children, and thoſe whom he loves beſt, as we are aſſured by ſeveral Texts of Scripture; *whom the Lord loveth he correcteth as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth,* ſays the *wiſe Man, Prov.* iii. 12. And, *as many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* ſays our Lord, *Revel.* iii. 19. And, *if ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you, as with Sons, for what Son is he that the Father chaſteneth not? But if ye be without Chaſtiſement whereof all are Partakers then are ye Baſtards and not Sons,* ſays the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, Ch. xii. ℣. 7, 8.

And

And the Conſideration of this, that worldly Afflictions are an Argument of God's Love, is a great Conſolation to all good Men; and contributes very much to render them happy in all the Adverſities that befal them: By this Means they are able to ſuck ſweet out of the bittereſt Potion, and not only to be comforted but even to rejoyce in Tribulations: Thus *bleſſed are they that mourn*, or as the ſame Senſe is expreſs'd in *Job.* v. 17. *Happy is the Man whom God correcteth.*

2. The Afflictions that befal good Men in this World do not only not make them unhappy; but rather contribute towards their Felicity, by reaſon of thoſe abundant Conſolations wherewith at ſuch Times, they are refreſhed and ſupported by the Spirit of God.

This is a Happineſs not to be deſcribed, a Happineſs which none can be ſenſible of but thoſe who feel it; 'tis an inward and ſpiritual Comfort, which they can have no Notion of, who place all Happineſs in carnal Delights and ſenſual Satisfactions: But that 'tis very great, and renders their

Condition, (even while they are oppreſſed with the ſoreſt Calamities) not only tolerable, but in ſome meaſure joyous and pleaſant, appears plainly by the Effects, in that, even when they are under the greateſt Tribulations, they are not only content but chearful and thankful; that they can ſuffer the ſoreſt Pains without Murmuring and Impatience: Nay, as if they had no Senſe at all of the Pain they endure, do ſhew forth in their Speech, their Looks and all their Behaviour, all the Signs of inward Eaſe and Pleaſure: Thus the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of himſelf, 2 *Cor.* vii. 4. When his *Fleſh had no Reſt*, but he *was troubled on every ſide*, ſays, that he was nevertheleſs *filled with Comfort*, and was *exceeding joyful in all* his *Tribulations*; and in another Place, Ch. iv. ℣. 8. *We are troubled*, ſays he, *on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed, we are perplexed, but not in Deſpair, perſecuted but not forſaken, caſt down but not deſtroyed*; and in *Rom.* v. 3. ſpeaking of himſelf and other good Chriſtians, he ſays, that *being juſtified by Faith*, and *having*

Peace

Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they were able to *glory in their Tribulations*; and that which enabled both him and them to bear their Afflictions ſo joyfully, was ſome inward Comfort, ſome *unſpeakable Joy*, (as St. *Peter* calls it, 1 *Pet.* i. 8.) infuſed into them by the gracious Influences of God's Spirit, we are told by St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* i. 3, 4, 5. *Bleſſed be God*, ſays he, *even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them that are in Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God: For as the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our Conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt; and our Hope of you is ſtedfaſt, knowing that as ye are Partakers of the Sufferings, ſo ſhall ye be alſo of the Conſolation.* Well therefore might our *Saviour* pronounce ſuch Mourners bleſſed, even while they mourn, becauſe their Conſolations are greater than their Sufferings; and their outward Sorrow is far exceeded by

their inward Joy, which ſtill increaſes in proportion to thoſe Sufferings and Afflictions which are ſent upon them. Thus *bleſſed are they that mourn*, becauſe they are *comforted*.

3. And laſtly; The preſent Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Mourners, *i. e.* of good and righteous Men, even while they are in a ſuffering Condition, ariſes, in great meaſure, from thoſe bleſſed Fruits and Effects which worldly Afflictions are naturally apt to produce in pious and well-diſpoſed Perſons: Their Sufferings and Afflictions in this World contribute much to their Happineſs; becauſe they contribute much to their ſpiritual Good and Improvement.

'Twould be tedious now, (being indeed Matter enough for a large Diſcourſe by its ſelf) to reckon up all the Benefits and Advantages which good Men do reap by Afflictions; and therefore I ſhall now content my ſelf, with only briefly mentioning ſome few of them. And,

Firſt of all, our great Benefit and Advantage of worldly Croſſes and Afflictions, is, that they teach Men Patience, and Sub-

Submiſſion to God's Will. While Men are in Proſperity and every thing falls out according to their Deſire, they are tender and delicate; and while they are ſo, the leaſt croſs Accident that befals them, preſſes hard upon them, and galls and frets them exceedingly: But when they have been a little while inured to Hardſhips, and have been uſed to bear the Croſs, this renders them ſtrong and hardy, ſtout and couragious; and by daily uſe growing better acquainted with Afflictions, they ſoon come to eſteem thoſe but ſmall and light, which before ſeemed to be intolerable. And upon this Account the Prophet affirms, that *it is good for a Man* to be thus exerciſed even from his Childhood, to be always kept under this ſevere Diſcipline: *Lam.* iii. 27. *It is good*, ſays he, *for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth:* And he gives this Reaſon for it in the next Verſe, *he ſitteth alone and keepeth Silence, becauſe he hath born it long upon him*; being long uſed to it, by Degrees he grows inſenſible of its Weight, and becomes able to bear, without the leaſt fret-

ing, ſuch Adverſities, as otherwiſe would have put him out of all Patience: And this Advantage of Afflictions, the Apoſtles of our Lord, St. *Paul* and St. *James* do alſo take notice of, and thereupon affirm it to be Matter of Joy rather than of Grief or Trouble that we are exerciſed thereby: *My Brethren*, ſays St. *James*, *count it all Joy, when ye fall into divers Temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your Faith worketh Patience; but let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.* *Jam.* i. 2, 3, 4. And, *we*, ſays St. *Paul*, *glory in Tribulations alſo, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope.*

Secondly, Another great Benefit of Afflictions to good Men, is that they put them upon ſeriouſly conſidering their paſt courſe of Life, and amending whatever they find amiſs in it: For 'tis natural for Men while they are at eaſe and have nothing to vex them, to be alſo without Thought and Care; and to be ſo taken up with

with the Delights and Pleaſures of Senſe, as to have no Leiſure for ſober Conſideration: They go ſmoothly on in their Courſe, and never ſuſpect any Evil in it, ſo long as they meet with no Rub or Hindrance; and while all things fall out to them according to their own Hearts Deſire, they make no doubt but that all is well between God and them, and that they are the Favourites and Darlings of Heaven: But now, on the other ſide, when things fall out croſs and adverſe, and they meet with many Afflictions and Loſſes and Diſappointments, this as naturally puts them upon conſidering their Ways, and enquiring into the cauſe of God's contending with them; when all earthly Comforts fail them, they would be then glad to receive Comfort elſewhere; and this they can have only from the Teſtimony of their own Conſcience, and a well-grounded Aſſurance of God's Favour, which they can by no means attain to, till they have diligently ſifted and examined their paſt Life, and heartily lamented all the Tranſgreſſions of it; and there-

therefore the *wiſe Man*, *Eccleſ.* vii. 14. preſcribes this to ſuch as are afflicted, as the beſt means of receiving Conſolation under their Sufferings that they can uſe, *in the Day of Adverſity*, ſays he, *conſider*. Indeed they who cannot by Afflictions, be brought to a ſerious and ſober Conſideration of things, may juſtly be deem'd incorrigible, and paſt Hopes of being reclaimed any other ways; *when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs*, ſays the *Prophet:* Even the moſt hardned Sinners (ſuch as *Pharaoh* was) when the Hand of God is heavy upon them, can ſcarcely forbear relenting ſomewhat; this rouſes them out of their Stupidity, and awakens their Conſcience which had been long laid to ſleep; and makes them at leaſt entertain ſome Thoughts and make ſome faint Reſolutions of amending their Lives: But in good Men it works this Effect more certainly and ſucceſsfully; *I have ſurely*, ſays God, *heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus; thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a Bul-*

a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke; turn thou me and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely, after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was inſtructed I ſmote upon my Thigh; I was aſhamed, yea even confounded, becauſe I did bear the Reproach of my Youth. *Jer.* xxxi. 18, 19. And this is no more than what may always reaſonably be expected, according to that Saying, in *Job* xxxiv. 31, 32. *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more; that which I ſee not, teach thou me, and if I have done Iniquity I will do no more.*

And thoſe are bleſſed Afflictions indeed which work this good Effect upon us; and we may well ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* cxix. 67, 71. *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now I have kept thy Word: It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy Statutes.* And this is what we are alſo told by the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, and it is made by him an Argument why we ſhould endure all worldly Afflictions with Patience

and

and humble Submiſſion to God's Will: *Heb.* xii. 11. *No chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheleſs afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby.*

3. Thirdly, Another Fruit and Benefit of worldly Afflictions (and the laſt I ſhall now mention) is, that they naturally tend to wean us from this World, and to make us deſpiſe all the fading Glories and empty Pleaſures of this Life.

If the World always ſmiled upon us, and we had every thing which our Heart could wiſh, we ſhould be for taking up our Abode here, and never think of travelling farther: In Mercy therefore to us, doth God mix the ſweet things of this World with bitter, that finding our ſelves uneaſy in this State of Pilgrimage, we may long to arrive at our heavenly Countrey; and that ſeeing the Emptineſs and Unſatisfactorineſs of all things below, we may ſet our Hearts and Affections on things above, which only can yield us true Content and Satisfaction; and if God ſhould not

not diſpenſe things to us in this manner, we ſhould be ſo linked and wedded to the World, and the Delights and Pleaſures of Senſe, that we ſhould have no reliſh at all of ſpiritual Joys, nor ever ſet our ſelves to ſeek for them; for there is no greater Enemy to the Love of God, and true Religion, than a paſſionate Love of the World; *the Friendſhip of the World is Enmity with God*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *whoſoever is a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God. Jam.* iv. 4. and, *love not the World*, ſays St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. iii. 15. *neither the things that are in the World, if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* But now this Leſſon, of not loving the World is what we can hardly learn ſo long as the World loves us, *i. e.* ſo long as it fawns and ſmiles upon us, and yields us all the Delight it can; we are too childiſh to be perſuaded by Reaſon from what ſeems pleaſant to our Taſte, and therefore God deals with us, as Nurſes do with their Children, when they would wean them from the Breaſt; they either keep it from their

their Sight, that they may forget it; or if that wo'n't do, they ſay upon it or anoint it with ſomewhat that is bitter or diſtaſtful; and then, without any Reaſoning or Perſuaſion, the Child of courſe comes to loath and diſlike what it was before ſo fond of. And thus, I ſay, God deals with us, when he takes from us the things wherein we moſt delighted, or ſends Croſſes and Afflictions upon us; he thereby makes the World not ſeem ſo pleaſant to us as it once did, and by this means weans our Affections from it; he perſuades us by our Senſes, to what we ſhould hardly have been perſuaded by Reaſon, *viz.* to aim at an higher and greater Happineſs, than any is to be found in this World, and not to ſeek for it here, where it cannot be had.

Thus you ſee the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who *mourn*; *i. e.* of thoſe who meet with many Adverſities and Afflictions in this Life, even while they continue in this Vale of Tears. *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; they are bleſſed even at preſent, becauſe they ſee the Love and Kindneſs of God

God to them, in the worldly Afflictions which he ſends upon them; and are ſupported under them by the Comforts of God's Spirit, and do reap great Benefit and Advantage from them. But

2. Beſides this in preſent, there is another Bleſſedneſs in reverſion, which belongs to ſuch Mourners; *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*; they are not unhappy even at preſent, in that mournful and ſad Eſtate which they appear in, as I have ſhew'd already; but they ſhall be infinitely more happy hereafter, and their preſent mournful Circumſtances will, not a little, contribute towards it; *they ſhall be comforted.*

And the future Bleſſedneſs of thoſe good Men, whoſe Lot it is to be afflicted in this World, conſiſts, 1*ſt*, In a clear and perfect change and alteration of their Condition; here they mourn, and hereafter they ſhall rejoice: And 2*dly*, In having their future Happineſs proportioned to their preſent Miſery, in their being more happy in another World, for their being more afflicted here.

1. I ſay, their future Bleſſedneſs conſiſts in a clear and perfect Alteration of their Condition. Here they mourn, and hereafter *they ſhall be comforted*; here they are ſorrowful, by reaſon of many Tribulations, and hereafter they ſhall laugh and rejoice, being freed from all their preſent Miſeries, and from the Fear of any ſuch ever befalling them thereafter. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*, ſays St. *James*, *for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* And with the ſame Argument our *Saviour* comforteth his Diſciples, and prepares them to endure patiently thoſe manifold Afflictions which he had foretold would befal them; *John* xvi. 20. *Verily I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoyce; and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy*——and again, *V.* 22. *Now ye have Sorrow, but I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you.* And oh! what a bleſſed Change will this

this be? When they who fed here upon the *Bread of Tears*, and whoſe *Drink was mingled with weeping*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, ſhall have *all Tears*, for ever, *wiped away from their Eyes?* How will they be tranſported with Joy, when they ſhall ſee themſelves, thro' this Vale of Miſery, arrived to the Land of everlaſting Felicity, where there ſhall be *no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain*; foraſmuch as all *the former things are paſſed away?*

And that thus it will be, we are plainly told by our *Saviour* in *Luk.* vi. 21. *Bleſſed are ye*, ſays he, ſpeaking to his Diſciples, ye *that weep now, for ye ſhall laugh.*

And there is moreover a Fitneſs and Congruity in it, as is plainly intimated in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, where *Abraham* gives this Reaſon, of that Difference which was made in their Conditions in the other World. *Luk.* xvi. 25. *Son*, ſays he, to the rich Man, then in

Hell, *remember that thou in thy Life-time receiveds thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Well therefore might our *Saviour* here pronounce ſuch Mourners bleſſed, ſeeing they ſhall be ſo comforted.——Eſpecially ſeeing alſo, as I obſerved farther in the ſecond place.

2. Their future Bleſſedneſs ſhall be proportioned to their preſent Miſery; and the more afflicted they were here, the more happy they ſhall be in the other World. For thus we are told by the *Apoſtle*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. That *our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory:* and, *bleſſed are ye*, ſays our *Saviour, when Men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you, falſly, for my Sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.* The greater Difficulties we meet with in our Chriſtian Warfare, the greater our Victory in overcoming

coming them, and our Crown will be ſo much the more glorious: and when this time comes we ſhall ſee, and feel by our own Experience, the truth of what the *Apoſtle* affirms, *Rom.* viii. 18. *that the Sufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which ſhall* then *be revealed in us. Then* (as the wiſe *Hebrew* ſpeaks, *Wiſd.* v. 1, &c.) *ſhall the righteous ſtand in great Boldneſs, before the Face of ſuch as have afflicted him; who, when they ſee it, ſhall be troubled with terrible Fear, and ſhall be amazed at the Strangeneſs of his Salvation, ſo far beyond all that they looked for: and they repenting, and groaning for Anguiſh of Spirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, This was he whom we had ſometimes in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach: we Fools accounted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour: but how is he* now *number'd among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints.*

And thus we have ſeen what is both the

preſent and the future Bleſſedneſs of the Mourners, *i. e.* of ſuch as being good Men, do nevertheleſs meet with great Croſſes and Troubles, and Afflictions in this Life, of ſuch, I ſay, as being good Men, are ſo afflicted; for, (as I have frequently hinted already) the Bleſſedneſs here aſſured and promiſed to the Mourners, or to ſuch as are in a ſad and calamitous Condition, is not aſſured and promiſed to them merely as, and becauſe they are Mourners, or afflicted; but as, and becauſe, being good Men, they are even in that mournful State able from the Teſtimony of their own Conſciences, to obtain a reaſonable Aſſurance of God's Love to them, are capable of receiving Comfort from his holy Spirit, are in the way of reaping ſpiritual Advantage from their worldly Adverſities; and are alſo ſuch as the Promiſes of eternal Joy and Happineſs are made to: for to them who are not ſuch, there is no Comfort at all to be had in any Affliction, no Bleſſedneſs at all to be reaped therefrom.

The

The Conſideration of which ſhou'd therefore be a ſtrong Motive to us to endeavour with all Diligence to become ſuch Perſons as this Bleſſedneſs is promiſed to. For whether we be good or bad Men, Afflictions, of one kind or other, are what we muſt look to meet with while we continue in this World. *Man is born unto Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward.* Miſery and Trouble therefore being the Lot of our Mortality, being what no Wealth or Honour, what not even Piety and Virtue are ſufficient to exempt us from; it muſt needs be our greateſt Wiſdom ſo to arm our ſelves againſt all Adverſities, as that we may feel as little as is poſſible of that Miſery which we cannot avoid: and eſpecially to uſe any means which can be preſcribed whereby to ſuck ſweet out of bitter, to reap Advantage even from Loſs, to turn Sorrow into Joy, and to receive Comfort even from the ſevereſt Adverſities. But as there is no way to do this, but by obtaining a good Aſſurance of God's Love

to us from the Teſtimony of our own Conſciences, that we are ſincerely careful in all things to pleaſe him; ſo this will certainly do it, for a good Conſcience is a continual Feaſt. The Love of God ſhed abroad in our Hearts, will make us not only eaſy, but in ſome meaſure chearful under the ſevereſt Diſpenſations of his Providence, conſidered as ordered to us by one who knows better than we do what is good for us, and can and certainly will make all things work together for good to us. Or if our Miſery be ſo very great, by reaſon of our worldly Afflictions, as that we can't be fully at eaſe while they continue upon us; we may yet, during our preſent Sorrow, be joyful thro' hope of being made perfectly at eaſe in a very ſhort time. And it muſt needs be a great Comfort, even to ſuch as have nothing elſe to ſupport and comfort them, to conſider and believe firmly, that tho' *Heavineſs may endure for a Night*, *Joy* will *come in the Morning*; and that *theſe light Afflictions*,

ons, which are *but for a Moment, will work for* them *an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

Thus *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE Mourners for SIN.

DISCOURSE IV.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Mourners for Sin.

MATTH. v. 4.

Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.

I Have already begun a Diſcourſe on theſe Words, wherein I propoſed to do theſe two Things.

I. To enquire, who are the *Mourners* that our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of; and to whom he pronounces a Bleſſedneſs.

II. To ſhew what is this Bleſſedneſs which belongs to them as ſuch; *bleſſed are they that mourn for they ſhall be comforted.*

I. To enquire who are the *Mourners* that our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of and pronounces bleſſed.

And

And by thoſe that mourn, I told you, might be meant, either 1. Such as are in a mournful and ſorrowful Condition in this World, who have a great Share of Troubles and Afflictions in this Life; or elſe, 2. Such as do afflict and grieve themſelves, and are full of Sorrow and Trouble in their own Minds, upon the Account of thoſe manifold Sins which they have been guilty of. Now which of theſe Mourners our *Saviour* here meant, I told you is uncertain; for his Words may fairly be taken in either Senſe: and of thoſe Commentators both ancient and modern, who have given their Opinion in this matter, ſome have expounded them in the firſt Senſe, and ſome in the ſecond, and both (as it ſeems to me) with equal Probability of Reaſon.

Foraſmuch therefore as the Words are true, in which ſoever of theſe Senſes we underſtand them, (as has been ſhewed in part already, and will be ſhewed more fully in the Sequel of this Diſcourſe) I ſee no Reaſon why we ſhould ſo embrace and adhere to one of theſe Interpretations, as to exclude and reject the other; but in

ſuch

ſuch a Caſe as this, I think it more reaſonable, to admit both Interpretations, foraſmuch as they are both equally probable, and are alſo very well conſiſtent with each other.

And accordingly, I did, the laſt Time diſcourſe of the Words taken in the firſt Senſe, *i. e.* underſtanding by Mourners, ſuch as are in a ſad and ſorrowful Condition in this World, by reaſon of the many Troubles Croſſes and Afflictions which they meet with in it; which ſort of Mourners, are, in the Opinion of the World, deem'd very unhappy: but nevertheleſs, if they be good Men, (and it is for the moſt part the Lot of good Men, and even of the beſt of Men, to be thus afflicted; while on the contrary they who are much worſe, do commonly, to appearance fare much better, and the worſt Men of all, do oftentimes paſs away their Days, in great Plenty and Proſperity; I ſay if they be good Men who are thus afflicted) their temporal Afflictions are ſo far from rendring them unhappy, that they rather contribute towards their Bleſſedneſs: *Bleſſed are they*

they that thus *mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* There is (as our *Saviour* here teaches us) both a preſent and a future Bleſſedneſs belonging to them.

And their preſent Bleſſedneſs (as I told you) ariſes partly from their ſenſe of God's Love and Kindneſs to them, in ſending theſe temporal Afflictions upon them; partly from thoſe Comforts of the Holy Spirit, wherewith they are refreſhed and ſupported under all their Sufferings; and partly from the manifold Benefits and Advantages which they reap from them.—— Thus they are bleſſed even at preſent and while they mourn, *Bleſſed are they that mourn.*

But then, ſecondly, beſides this at preſent, there is another Bleſſedneſs in reverſion which belongs to all good Men who are afflicted here; they ſhall be comforted, ſays our Saviour: and this future Bleſſedneſs, conſiſts (as I told you) in two things. 1. In a clear and perfect Change and Alteration of their Condition: here they mourn and are in Heavineſs, by reaſon of their many Tribulations; and hereafter they ſhall

ſhall laugh and rejoice, being perfectly freed from all their preſent Miſeries, and from the fear of ſuch ever befalling them again: And, 2. In having their future Happineſs proportioned to their preſent Miſery, in their being more happy in another World for their being more afflicted here, according to that of the *Apoſtle*; *our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*—— But of theſe Things I have already diſcourſed at large and will not trouble you with any farther Repetition.

I proceed now therefore, to ſhew the Truth of this Saying of our *Saviour*'s, taken in the ſecond Senſe aforementioned; *i. e.* underſtanding by the *Mourners* that he here ſpeaks of, ſuch as do afflict and grieve themſelves, and are full of Sorrow and Trouble in their own Minds, upon the Account of their Sins: as if he had ſaid, bleſſed are they that mourn for their Sins, for they ſhall be comforted.

And here I ſhall ſhew

1. Who

1. Who are the Mourners for Sin to whom this Bleſſedneſs belongs. And,

2. What is both the preſent and future Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Mourners; *bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

1. I ſhall ſhew who are the Mourners for Sin, to whom this Bleſſedneſs of the Text belongs; *bleſſed are they that mourn.*

Our *Saviour*'s Words indeed are univerſal, *bleſſed are they that mourn*, as if he had ſaid, bleſſed are *all they* that mourn: but from other Texts of Scripture we are plainly taught to put ſome Reſtrictions and Limitations on this univerſal Propoſition, and to underſtand it as if it had been ſaid, bleſſed are they that mourn and grieve for their Sins in the right Seaſon, and after a due manner; there being ſome ſort of mourning for Sin, which is neither good in it ſelf, nor does in the leaſt conduce either to our preſent or to our future Felicity.

For *Eſau* was certainly very ſorrowful for his having ſold his Birth-right, and yet he could *not get to inherit the Bleſſing*, *though*

though he ſought it carefully with Tears. As is obſerved, *Heb.* xii. 17.

And the Traytor *Judas* was much afflicted in his Mind, for his having betrayed his Maſter; he was ſo very ſad and melancholy upon it, that *he went and hanged himſelf*, as you may ſee *Matth.* xxvii. 5. or rather (as the Word in the Original will bear, and as that Place therefore, I think, ought rather to be expounded, to reconcile it with that other Relation of the manner of his Death, which we meet with in *Acts* i. 18.) his Grief and Sorrow for that baſe and vile Fact was ſo very violent and extreme, that it perfectly choaked or ſtrangled him; and yet for all this, he was not bleſſed.

And laſtly (to name no more) the damned Spirits in Hell are likewiſe very great Mourners for Sin; for there is nothing to be heard or ſeen there, but weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of Teeth: theſe poor Wretches are, without all doubt, Mourners in good earneſt; and yet are far enough from being bleſſed, being ſunk

down into the Gulph of Miſery, and condemned to perpetual Torments.

Time was indeed, when one half of thoſe Tears, which now avail them nothing, nor do in the leaſt abate the ſcorching Heat of that Fire which ſurrounds them; would have availed them very much, and have been ſufficient to have kept them from ever coming into that Place of Torment: but that Time is now expired, 'tis irrecoverably paſt and gone; and now, tho' they mourn and weep abundantly, they muſt alſo mourn and weep everlaſtingly, without Comfort, and without any hope of Comfort to eternal Ages.

Theſe therefore, and ſuch like are not the Mourners for Sin that our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of, and whom he pronounces bleſſed; but the bleſſed Mourners, are only ſuch as mourn for their Sins while the Day of Grace laſts, and while God ſtretches forth his Arms to receive them to Mercy; and to theſe our *Saviour* himſelf expreſſly confines this Bleſſedneſs, in *Luk.* vi. 21. (a Place parallel to the Text) *bleſſed are ye*, ſays he, *that weep now*. This is indeed

deed the proper Seaſon for Mourning, and they who paſs this by, their Mourning will benefit them nothing; it will be only a part of their Puniſhment, not a means of their Happineſs.

And yet neither does the Bleſſedneſs of the Text belong to all thoſe that do now mourn for their Sins, unleſs they mourn alſo in the right manner, as well as in the right Seaſon.

For there are ſome who, like the Mourners which in ancient Times were wont to be hired to grace their Funerals, have Tears at command, and can weep as often and as long as they pleaſe, with as little Grief as the others did, without the leaſt Dram of inward Sorrow and Affliction of Spirit.

They are not therefore thoſe that only ſhed Tears, or that make ſad Howlings and Lamentations for their Sins, who are here pronounced bleſſed; but the Bleſſedneſs of the Text belongs to thoſe only who are inwardly grieved and afflicted for their Sins, whether they make ſuch outward Shews of it or no: for there is an

hypocritical Sorrow which never fails to ſhew its ſelf by Tears and a disfigured Face, and ſuch like outward Expreſſions of Grief: and again there is a real and undiſſembled Sorrow, which is often without theſe or any ſuch viſible Effects; an inward Grief and Compunction, without Sighs or Groans or Tears; a Sorrow towards God, which diſcovers not it ſelf at all, or, however as little as it can towards Men; *a godly Sorrow*, as the *Apoſtle* ſtyles it, in diſtinction from a *Sorrow of the World, which* only *worketh Death*;

And the Properties of this godly Sorrow, whether it be with Tears, or without, are theſe two.

1. That it is accompanied with a perfect Hatred of thoſe Sins which we bewail: the true Penitent mourns and grieves, not ſo much for the Miſery which his Sin has brought him to, or is like to bring upon him; as for the Baſeneſs of the Sin itſelf, which for its own Turpitude only he would equally hate and abominate, altho' he were ſure to eſcape all Puniſhment for it. He is angry with himſelf for the Fact alone,

alone, without Conſideration of its Conſequences; and altho' he were aſſured before-hand that God would forgive him, he would not be able to forgive himſelf; but rather this Reflection would add to his Sorrow, the Conſideration I mean of his own Baſeneſs and Ingratitude in offending ſo good, ſo kind, ſo merciful a Being as God is.

2. Another Property of a true godly Sorrow for Sin, is, that it certainly works a Change and Amendment of Life; *godly Sorrow*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of:* he who ſo grieves for his Sins as to forſake them, is moſt certainly truly grieved; but he who ſtill continues in them, cannot in any reaſon be thought heartily ſorrowful for them: for how can it be thought, that a Man hates, what he freely chuſes, and that he ſhould delight to do thoſe things which put him to Grief? So that a Sorrow for Sin, which has not this Effect, is moſt certainly only feigned and pretended; or if it can be ſuppoſed real, it is however too ſmall and faint to obtain

our Pardon; for the Sorrow which God requires as the Condition of Forgiveneſs, is a Sorrow of the Heart, and not only an Affliction of the Body; thus we are told by the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* li. 19. *The Sacrifice of God is a broken Spirit, a broken and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* And in the ſecond Chapter of the Book of the Prophet *Joel*, after God had required, that they ſhould return unto him with all the Shews of Sorrow and Contrition; *turn unto me with all your Heart, and with Faſting and with Weeping, and with Mourning*; the *Prophet* plainly intimates in the next Verſe, that what was meant by all this, was an inward Contrition of Spirit, and not the outward Signs of it. ℣. 13. *Rent your Hearts and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.*

You ſee then who are the Mourners for Sin here ſpoken of, they are ſuch as mourn, both in the right Seaſon, and after a right manner; ſuch only as now while the Day of Life laſts and Mercy may be found, do ſo bewail the Sins and Miſcar-

riages

riages of their paſt Life, as not to repeat them any more. The mourning here ſpoken of is a Paſſion and Affection of the Mind, rather than of the Body; and conſiſts in being heartily vex'd and diſpleas'd with our ſelves, that ever we have acted ſo fooliſhly and unreaſonably; and in utterly abhorring the Thoughts of ever doing the like again.

And now having ſeen who are the Mourners for Sin, here ſpoken of, I proceed in the ſecond place,

II. To ſhew what is the Bleſſedneſs, and what will be the Reward of ſuch Mourners; *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* And the Conſideration of what ſhall be ſaid on this Head will, I hope, be ſufficient, both to ſhew the Truth of our *Saviour*'s Aſſertion, that ſuch Mourners are bleſſed; and alſo to excite us all to ſuch mourning for our Sins, as the Bleſſedneſs is here annexed to.

And there is a two-fold Bleſſedneſs here declared to belong to ſuch Mourners as I have before deſcribed: One at preſent, *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; and ano-

ther in reverſion, *they ſhall be comforted.* They are bleſſed now, even while they mourn, and they ſhall be yet more bleſſed when their mourning is over.

1. I ſay they are bleſſed even at preſent, *Bleſſed are they that mourn*; they are bleſſed even while they mourn, and they are the more bleſſed becauſe they mourn: they are then in a true account much more happy, and their Condition, even while their Sorrow is upon them, is to be preferred before, and choſen much rather than theirs who paſs their Days in Jollity and Mirth; never ſo much as once ſeriouſly reflecting upon what they have done, or conſidering whither they are going.

But is there then, you'll ſay, any Bleſſedneſs in mere mourning? Can Sorrow make a Man happy?

I do not ſay that: Nay, on the contrary, I ſay that thoſe are, of all God's Creatures, the moſt happy, who never ſorrowed at all, nor ever had any Occaſion to be ſorrowful; I mean thoſe bleſſed Spirits, the holy Angels, who kept their Covenant

Covenant with God, and never at any time tranſgreſſed his Commandment.

And they come next to them in Happineſs, who come next to them in Innocence; I mean thoſe holy Men and Women, who by God's Aſſiſtance have kept themſelves from all great Tranſgreſſions, and whoſe Slips and Infirmities have been but few; who have kept a conſtant watch and guard over themſelves, and whoſe Conſciences can teſtify, that they have ſerved God according to the beſt of their Knowledge, in Truth, and in Sincerity of Heart.

I freely grant therefore, that there is no Joy in the World comparable to that of a clear Conſcience; and they who have this, have no need or occaſion for mourning. But this is a Joy which none of the Sons of *Adam* are capable of, becauſe they all have ſinned; for as the Apoſtle St. *John* ſays, 1 Epiſt. i. 8. *If we ſay that we have no Sin we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us; if we ſay that we have no Sin we make him a Lyar, and his Word is not in us.*

I like-

I likewiſe freely grant, that the next happieſt State to theirs who have kept their Innocence, is that of thoſe who have the leaſt need to be ſorrowful; *i. e.* who have ſincerely endeavoured after the Purity of Angels, tho' after all they have not been able to attain to it. *Our rejoicing is this*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, the *Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Converſation in the World*, 2 Cor. i. 12. But theſe happy Souls have been but a few, a very few indeed, a *Noah*, a *Daniel*, or a *Job*, and here and there one or two beſides; and therefore being ſo few, they are ſcarce to be numbred or accounted of, when we ſpeak of Mankind in general, who for the moſt part are exceeding wicked and corrupt, and the Thoughts of whoſe Heart are generally only evil, and that continually.

Upon Suppoſition therefore that we are all very grievous Sinners, (which is ſo plain a Truth, that I preſume I ſhall not need to beg leave to ſuppoſe it) I affirm, that the greateſt Joy and Happineſs, which in this

lapſed

lapſed and degenerate Eſtate we are capable of, is in truly ſorrowing for our Sins; ſo that our *Saviour*, having reſpect to the common Condition of Mankind, might well enough affirm in general, *Bleſſed are they that mourn.*

For being (as in truth we are) vile and grievous Sinners, it is reaſonable that we ſhould likewiſe be Mourners; Shame, and Remorſe, and Sorrow, are the juſt and natural Conſequences of Sin; they are indeed the very beſt Effects that Sin can poſſibly produce. So that ſince we are ſuch ſinful Creatures, to grieve and mourn at the Conſideration of our great Sinfulneſs, is what is juſt and right, and what, in this ſtate of things befits and becomes us: And from hence ariſes, in great meaſure, the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that mourn.

For there is a ſecret Joy and Complacence of Mind, naturally reſulting from the Senſe of having done a thing that was juſt and reaſonable, fit and becoming, and what was our neceſſary Duty do. So that if we are as ſenſible as we ought to be of our own great Sinfulneſs, we cannot but be

be alſo ſenſible that we do well in grieving and mourning; and whatſoever is well done by us, muſt needs be a Cauſe of inward Joy and Satisfaction of Mind to us.

Whereas now on the contrary, nothing can be more afflicting to a pious Soul, that is at all affected with its own Sinfulneſs and Unworthineſs, (nothing, I ſay, can be more afflicting to ſuch a Man) than to think that he is not ſo ſenſible of, not ſo deeply affected with, the Conſideration of his own ſinful and wretched Condition, as in Reaſon he ought to be: he cannot but look at this ſtupid and ſenſeleſs State, in which he perceives himſelf, as a dangerous Symptom, as an Approach to, and a leſſer Degree of a ſpiritual Death; perceiving himſelf to have loſt his Senſe and Feeling, in a great Meaſure, he will be almoſt ready to deſpair of himſelf, and to fear that he is almoſt paſt recovery to a ſpiritual Life: the Conſideration of which cannot but caſt him into a deep Melancholy and Dejection of Mind; and nothing can give ſuch a Man Eaſe but an increaſe

creaſe of Sorrow; nothing can make him hope well of himſelf, but the recovery of ſuch a Senſe and Feeling as he has ſometimes had, and knows he ought always to have, of the Evil of Sin: and if he could but once come to grieve and mourn for his Sins, as he knows he ought to do; this alone would yield him more Comfort and Conſolation, than any thing elſe in the World can poſſibly do.

Thus, you ſee, that they who mourn for their Sins as they ought to do, are bleſſed even at preſent; that there is a ſecret Joy naturally and immediately reſulting even from their Mourning; and the more they mourn, ſo much the more bleſſed they are, and the more capable of Comfort, becauſe their Condition, upon that very account, is ſo much more hopeful than the Condition of any other Man that is equally ſinful, but not equally ſorrowful; *Bleſſed are they that mourn.* The Condition of ſuch ſorrowful Perſons may indeed, in the Eye of the World, ſeem ſad and miſerable, but it is really full of inward Pleaſure and Satisfaction; and

to

to ſuch Mourners may moſt fitly be applied the reverſe of that Sentence which the wiſe Man utters concerning the Mirth of the wicked; *Prov.* xiv. 13. *Even in Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful, and the end of that Mirth is Heavineſs*; (the reverſe, I ſay, of this Sentence may moſt truly and fitly be applied to theſe ſincere Mourners for their Sins) *even in weeping the Heart is glad, and the end of this Heavineſs is Joy.*

And this leads me to diſcourſe of the other Branch of that Bleſſedneſs which belongs to ſuch true Mourners, *viz.*

2. That which is in Reverſion: That Bleſſedneſs wherewith their preſent Sorrow for Sin, if it be true and unfeigned, ſhall be rewarded afterwards, expreſſed here by our *Saviour*, by the word *Comfort*; *they ſhall be comforted.*

And this Bleſſedneſs in Reverſion is likewiſe two-fold, according as the Promiſe of Comfort here made to the Mourners may be underſtood to refer, either to the future Time of this preſent Life, or to that future Life which we ſhall hereafter lead,

lead, when this is quite expired. In both which reſpects the true Mourners for Sin are indeed bleſſed; *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*: here in this World they ſhall be comforted in part, but more fully and more certainly in the other World.

1. They ſhall be comforted even in this World, and that, two ways.

(1.) By a good Hope that their Sins are forgiven them, by a reaſonable Aſſurance that God accepts their Contrition, and for the Sake of his dear Son is fully reconciled to them.

This, I ſay, they may be aſſured of, provided they are aſſured of the reality of their own Sorrow or Contrition; *i. e.* if it hath been ſuch a Sorrow as hath wrought a Change and Amendment of Life: for *a broken and contrite Heart* God hath promiſed *not to deſpiſe*, Pſal. li. 17. And *he that confeſſeth and forſaketh his Sins ſhall have Mercy*; ſo we are told, *Prov.* xxviii. 13. And *if we confeſs our Sins* (ſays St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. i. 9. *i. e.* if we confeſs them with Sorrow and Deteſtation;

on; for a mere Confeſſion, or recital over of our Sins, without Grief and Abhorrence of them, is not an available Confeſſion; *if*, ſays he, *we confeſs our Sins) he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.*

On theſe Promiſes therefore we may ſafely rely; and if we are but ſure of our own Sincerity, and that our Sorrow hath been of the right ſort, a godly Sorrow that hath wrought Repentance in us; we may be as ſure that we are at preſent in a juſtified State, as we are that God is true: and we may alſo very reaſonably hope, that the ſame Grace of God which hath begun a good Work in us, will (if we are not wanting to our ſelves) go on to perfect it; and that as we are already, by the Power of God, reſcued from the Dominion of Satan, and all the Powers of Darkneſs, we ſhall by the ſame divine Power be preſerved in Faith and Obedience to our Lives end.

And what more comfortable Voice can a Sinner hear, than this, *Thy Sins are forgiven*

forgiven thee? What can be more refreſhing to a Man, who was juſt on the Brink of Deſpair, than a Hope of eternal Life; a Hope that is well-grounded, a Hope that will not make aſhamed? This Peace with God, and in our own Minds; this bleſſed Aſſurance of our good Eſtate, and the Hope of its Continuance, is certainly the greateſt Comfort which we are capable of in this mortal Life; which therefore being attainable only by a true Sorrow, and a hearty Contrition for our paſt Sins, and what may be certainly attained that way, our *Saviour* might well pronounce a Bleſſedneſs to all who ſo mourn, becauſe they ſhall be thus comforted.

2. They who mourn for their Sins after a godly ſort, ſhall likewiſe be farther comforted even in this World, by eſcaping thoſe ſevere and terrible Judgments of God, whereby he uſes to ſhew his Diſpleaſure againſt Sinners even in this Life.

For (generally ſpeaking) the end of all God's Judgments upon Sinners in this World, is their Amendment; and there-

fore, if before he ſtrikes, and while he only ſhakes his Rod over them, they are ſo heartily affected with the Senſe of their own ſinfulneſs, and of the Severity of that Puniſhment which they have deſerved, as thereupon to ſet themſelves to ſeek his Favour by a true godly Sorrow for all the Errors of their paſt Life, and a ſincere Endeavour to reform and amend what is amiſs, God has his Deſign; and ſo there is reaſon to hope that now he will not ſend down that Judgment, which now there is not that Occaſion for that there was: For God, as the Prophet tells us, *doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*; he is *ſlow to Wrath*, and backward to puniſh, and ſoon *repenteth him of the Evil.* He takes no Delight at all in putting Men to Pain, and had much rather they would not give him Provocation to puniſh them; and as ſoon alters his Mind to Sinners, as they alter theirs to him; as quickly changeth his Purpoſe of puniſhing them, as they repent of thoſe Sins which made him to purpoſe it. And thus 'tis obſerved by the *Apoſtle*,

ſtle, 1 Cor. xi. 31. that *if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.*

Nay farther; ſuch is the bleſſed Effect of true Contrition, and an hearty Sorrow for Sin, that it oftentimes puts by thoſe Judgments which God had expreſſly threatned. For this was the Caſe of the People of *Nineveh*; on whoſe Deſtruction it ſeemed as if God was fully reſolved, when he ſent the Prophet *Jonah* on purpoſe to denounce the Threatning thereof againſt them; fixing alſo the very Day on which it ſhould happen to them; *yet forty Days, and* Nineveh *ſhall be overthrown:* And yet for all this, when by his Threatning they were moved to an hearty Sorrow and Humiliation for their Sins, and ſet themſelves to cry mightily to God for Pardon; and God ſaw that their Sorrow was unfeigned, (for they did not only weep and faſt for their Sins, but did *turn every one from his evil way, and from the Violence that was in their Hands*; I ſay, *when God ſaw their Works, and that they turned from their evil way) he alſo repented of the Evil that he ſaid he would do*

unto them, and he did it not; as you may ſee, *Jonah* iii. 10.

It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that this bleſſed Effect of Sorrow for Sin, doth not always certainly follow, even from the trueſt Contrition and Humiliation: for ſometimes God's Anger may be ſo highly provok'd, eſpecially by publick and ſcandalous Sins, as that he may ſee it expedient to make ſuch a Sinner an Example of his Juſtice in this World, for the Vindication of his own Honour, and for a Warning to others; and then the heartieſt Sorrow, and the deepeſt Contrition, may not be ſufficient to divert him from his Purpoſe of puniſhing ſuch a Tranſgreſſion by an exemplary Vengeance. For this was the Caſe of *David*, who being by the Prophet *Nathan* brought to a true Senſe of his deep Guiltineſs in murdering *Uriah*, and committing Adultery with his Wife, and to an hearty Contrition for the ſame; obtained thereby, immediately, an Aſſurance from the Prophet, of the perfect Remiſſion of that Puniſhment which is the proper Wages of Sin, *viz.* eternal Death;

as

as you may ſee, 2 *Sam.* xii. 13. *And* David *ſaid unto* Nathan, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord*; *and* Nathan *ſaid unto* David, *the Lord alſo hath put away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not die.* But yet even his true Repentance did not avail for the obtaining the Remiſſion of that temporal Puniſhment which it was agreeable to the divine Wiſdom to inflict, for a Sin which was ſo open and ſcandalous as his had been, and which conſequently would have been of ſo very ill Example, if it had paſſed altogether unpuniſhed. For notwithſtanding this Meſſage of the Prophet to him, *The Lord hath put away thy Sin*, he did not however eſcape thoſe temporal Judgments, which, in the Verſes before, the Prophet had foretold ſhould befal him; neither could he by all his Prayers and Tears, and Faſting afterwards, obtain of God the Life of his Baſtard-Child; and this very Reaſon is given for it, at ℣. 14. of that Chapter: *Howbeit*, ſays the Prophet to him, *becauſe by this Deed thou haſt given great Occaſion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, the Child alſo*

that is born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.

Thus; I ſay, it may ſometimes happen, that the trueſt Mourner for his Sin, may not be fully comforted in this World; but then, as I ſaid in the ſecond place,

2. There is another Bleſſedneſs in reverſion, belonging to ſuch Mourners, far greater than this, and which they may be ſure they ſhall not fail of; *viz.* in the other World, at the great Day of Judgment, which is therefore called by the Apoſtle St. *Peter*, *the time of Refreſhing*; becauſe then the Sins of all true Mourners ſhall be clearly blotted out, and they ſhall be perfectly acquitted from all manner of Puniſhment for the ſame; *Acts* iii. 19. *Repent, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come, from the Preſence of the Lord.*

Then they who mourn now as they ought, ſhall be ſure to be comforted; and they who weep now, to rejoice and ſing for eternal Ages: *Bleſſed are ye*, ſays our *Saviour*, *that weep now, for ye ſhall laugh*, Luke vi. 21. The time will come,

it

it will moſt aſſuredly come, and it cannot be long before it comes, when their weeping ſhall be turned into laughing, and their Heavineſs into Joy; when *all Tears ſhall be wiped away from their Eyes, and there ſhall be no more Sorrow nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain:* when *the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and come to* Sion, *with Songs, and everlaſting Joy upon their Heads*; when they ſhall *obtain Joy and Gladneſs, and Sorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away*, as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, *Iſaiah* xxxv. 10.

This Comfort, they who mourn for their Sins after a godly ſort, may be ſure of, becauſe 'tis expreſſly promiſed to all thoſe who ſo mourn for their Sins as to forſake them, *Ezek.* xviii. 21. *If the wicked turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, all his Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed ſhall not be mentioned unto him; in his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall he live.*

This everlaſting Comfort, the true Mourners for Sin cannot fail of, unleſs *Chriſt* be dead in vain: for this was the very Deſign of our Saviour's coming into the World, as we are told by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ch. lxi. ℣. 1, 2, 3. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good Tidings unto the Meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Priſon to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord. —To comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in* Sion, *to give unto them Beauty for Aſhes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Garment of Praiſe for the Spirit of Heavineſs.*

Thus, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* cxxvi. 5, 6. *They that ſow in Tears, ſhall reap in Joy*; and *he that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good Seed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with Joy, bringing his Sheaves with him.—— Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.*

Collect

Collect for *Lent.*

ALmighty and everlaſting God, who hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, and doſt forgive the Sins of all them that are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite Hearts, that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedneſs, may obtain of thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

THE NATURE OF MEEKNESS EXPLAINED.

THE

NATURE

OF

MEEKNESS

EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE V.

The Nature of Meekneſs explain'd.

MATTH. V. 5.

Bleſſed are the meek: for they ſhall inherit the Earth.

THIS is the third of the eight Beatitudes containing a like Paradox with the two foregoing; for it pronounces thoſe *bleſſed*, who in the Judgment of the World are the moſt deſpicable and contemptible Perſons upon the whole Face of the Earth, *viz.* the *meek*; and it promiſes them a Reward which they of all the Men in the World ſeem the leaſt likely to attain; *viz.* the *Inheritance of the Earth. Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

But

But as ſtrange as this may ſeem, it is nevertheleſs a great Truth. For the *meek* are indeed much more happy than the Fierce, the Angry, the Contentious; and their Meekneſs and Gentleneſs contributes not a little to make them ſo; *bleſſed are the meek.* And they likewiſe are, according to the natural courſe of things, in the higheſt Probability to obtain, and have by the divine Bleſſing the beſt Claim and Title to the Reward here promiſed, *the Inheritance of the Earth*; and that, whether we take the Word *Earth*, in its common Senſe, and underſtand by *the Inheritance of the Earth*, Plenty, or at leaſt a Competency of all things requiſite for the Support and Comfort of this mortal Life; or whether we take it in its ſpiritual Senſe, and underſtand by *Earth*, the true *Land of Promiſe*, the *heavenly Canaan*, the *new Heaven and the new Earth* ſpoken of in Scripture which will ariſe out of the Ruins of this Earth after the general Conflagration. The Truth of all which Particulars I hope to make appear in the following Diſcourſe. In which I ſhall obſerve this Method.

I. I ſhall ſhew, who are the Perſons here pronounced bleſſed; the *meek*; *bleſſed are the meek.* And;

II. I ſhall ſhew, both wherein their preſent Bleſſedneſs conſiſts, and what will be their Reward; and alſo what Claim and Title they have to the Promiſe which is here made to them; *they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

I. I ſhall ſhew who are the Perſons here pronounced bleſſed. The *meek*; *bleſſed are the meek.*

And in general, a meek Man is one who is mild and gentle, of a calm and quiet Diſpoſition; a ſweet temper'd, or a good-natur'd Man; one who is not apt to take fire, who is not prone to Anger, who is not given to Revenge; a meek Man is one who can take Injuries and Affronts without Fretting or Impatience, but will be ſure never to do an Injury or give an Affront to any Man; he is one who has the Maſtery of his Paſſion, and keeps it always within the Bounds of Decency and Reaſon; one who though he can ſhew Anger when there is juſt cauſe for

for it, yet never ſuffers it to grow to ſuch a Heighth and Degree as either to diſcompoſe and diſorder himſelf, or to be troubleſome or injurious to his Neighbours. This is the general Notion of Meekneſs.

But for the underſtanding more perfectly the Nature of this Virtue it will be needful to ſhew what are the juſt Bounds and Limits which ought to be ſet to the Paſſion of Anger; for, as I intimated, before, Meekneſs does not wholly ſtifle or repel Anger, but only moderates and reſtrains it; for Meekneſs is always a Virtue, and yet Anger is not always a Sin; it is indeed a Sin only when it is cauſeleſs or exceeds its juſt Bounds.

And this we are plainly taught even in the Scripture it ſelf. For thus, when St. *James*, Ch. i. ℣. 19. bids us *be ſlow to Wrath*, he plainly ſuppoſes that we may be angry upon ſome Occaſions, and that there is no Fault in being ſo. And when St. *Paul*, *Eph.* iv. 26. ſays, *be ye angry and ſin not*, he by that way of Expreſſion clearly intimates, that there is an Anger which is not ſinful: and when

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our *Lord* in *Matth.* v. 22. ſays, *whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe ſhall be in danger of the Judgment*, he manifeſtly grants that there are ſome Cauſes ſufficient to juſtifie our being angry with him; and our *Saviour* himſelf, *in whom there was no Sin*, and who invites Men to an Imitation of himſelf particularly in this Virtue of Meekneſs, *Matth*, xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek:* yet is taken notice of to have been angry, *Mark* iii. 5. *He looked upon them with Anger*, ſays the *Evangeliſt*, *being grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* From all which Places, it plainly appears, that a meek Man is not one who is never angry, but only one who is not angry without Cauſe, or in undue Meaſure.

And therefore for the better explaining the Nature of this Virtue of Meekneſs, I ſhall do theſe three Things.

1. I ſhall briefly ſhew what Anger is, and what are the ſeveral Degrees of it, in the moderating of which the Virtue of Meekneſs does chiefly conſiſt.

2. I ſhall ſhew in general the Bounds and Limits which this Virtue of Meekneſs does preſcribe to the Paſſion of Anger. And,

3. Laſtly; I ſhall then proceed to ſhew more particularly the Acts and Exerciſes of this Virtue; or how a meek Man (who has the Maſtery over his Paſſions, and is careful to moderate and govern them by Reaſon) will behave himſelf in moſt of the Conditions and Circumſtances of human Life, and in the ſeveral Relations wherein he ſtands to others.

1. I ſhall briefly ſhew what Anger is, and what are the ſeveral Degrees of it, in the regulating and moderating of which, the Exerciſe of Meekneſs does chiefly conſiſt.

And the general Notion of Anger is, that it is a Deſire to inflict ſome Pain or Evil on another, in conſideration of ſome Evil which he hath done, or ſome Injury which he hath offer'd to us.

And the Degrees of Anger depend either upon the *Nature* or *Kind* of that Evil which we deſire to inflict upon the Perſon who

who has anger'd us, or elſe upon the *Meaſure* of our Deſire to inflict the ſame.

1. The Degrees of Anger depend upon, and may be judg'd of by the *Nature* or *Kind* of that Evil which we deſire to inflict upon any Perſon who has diſpleas'd us.

1. For firſt; if the Evil which we deſire to inflict upon him be ſuch an Evil only as is juſt ſufficient for his Correction, and to make him repent of his Fault; then our Anger is of the loweſt Degree; and ſuch an Anger as this may in the general be ſaid to be not only lawful but laudable: 'tis plain there is thus far no harm in it, unleſs it be blameable upon ſome other Account or in ſome other Reſpect.

2. 'Tis an higher Degree of Anger, in caſe the Evil which we deſire he ſhould ſuffer for the Diſpleaſure he has done us, be greater than is needful to bring him to a Senſe of his Fault; or to deter others from the like; and ſuch an Anger is unreaſonable and immoderate.

3. 'Tis the higheſt Degree of all Anger, in caſe the Evil which we deſire he ſhould ſuffer, and have a mind to inflict upon

him, be ſuch as has no tendency to make us any Satisfaction or Reparation for the Wrong or Injury he has done us, but only to vex and grieve and put to pain, him who has done us the Diskindneſs; as when nothing will ſatisfie us but to have an *Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth*, and the like. In which Caſes the Evil which we deſire our Neighbour ſhould ſuffer for the hurt which he has done us in putting out our Eye or ſtriking out our Tooth, is a mere Evil to him without any Benefit at all accruing thence to our ſelves, unleſs it be in the malicious Pleaſure of ſeeing another Man in pain. For tho' we ſhould take out his Eye, we could not remove it into our own Head, and if we ſhould ſtrike out his Tooth, we could not fix it into our own Jaw.

And this is what is properly call'd Revenge, the leaſt Deſire whereof is altogether unlawful to a *Chriſtian*, being ſtrictly prohibited by our *Saviour* at ℣. 38. of this Chapter; *ye have heard that it hath been ſaid an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth; but I ſay unto you that*

that ye reſiſt not Evil; and by the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* xii. 17. *Recompenſe to no Man Evil for Evil*; and again, ℣. 19. *Avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath.* But,

2. The Degrees of Anger do mainly, and indeed moſt properly, depend upon the *Meaſure* and *Degree* of our Deſire of returning ſome Evil on the Perſon who has injured or diſpleaſed us. As for inſtance.

1. If while the Smart of the Evil which another has done us is freſh and lively, our Choler being on a ſudden moved, we wiſh that the like or a greater Evil may befal him; which Wiſh and Deſire we nevertheleſs give a Check to, and endeavour to ſuppreſs as ſoon as we come to our ſelves, and begin coolly and ſoberly to conſider things; this is the loweſt Degree of Anger.

2. A farther Degree of it is, when we continue to entertain theſe Thoughts and Deſires a longer time, and will not be perſuaded to forgive and forget an Injury.

3. 'Tis a yet farther Degree of Anger when we ſet our ſelves to meditate and

contrive how we may inflict upon our Neighbour ſome Evil equivalent to that which he has done us.

4. 'Tis an higher Degree of Anger ſtill, when having contriv'd by what means we may be even with him, we fully reſolve upon executing our purpoſe, and only wait for an Opportunity to do it.

5. What adds yet a farther Degree to our Anger is when theſe Thoughts and Contrivances of Revenge are pleaſant to us, and we take great Delight in the Fancy and Imagination of that Revenge which we intend to take upon him.

6. And laſtly; the higheſt Degree of all of this Paſſion of Anger is, when, after we have inflicted upon him ſuch Puniſhment as is ſufficient for his Correction, or after we have received from him ſufficient Recompence and Satisfaction for the Wrong which was done us, we nevertheleſs ſtill continue our Anger towards him, and ſtill go on to wiſh or deſign Evil to him. When our Anger proceeds to and continues at this height, and we will not by any means be perſuaded to be reconciled to,

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and in Charity with our Neighbour who has once diſpleaſed us, it then ceaſes to be what is properly called Anger; or rather, it then grows into what is much worſe even than the fierceſt Anger; for it then becomes Malice and Hatred, which are in their whole kind unlawful; for the *Chriſtian* Law declares that *he that hateth his Brother is a Murderer*, and that *no Murderer hath eternal Life:* the *Chriſtian* Law commands us to *forbear one another and to forgive one another, as God for Chriſt's Sake has forgiven us*; and as we our ſelves do expect or hope for Forgiveneſs at God's Hands.

And now, having ſhewn in general what Anger is, and what are the ſeveral Degrees of it, which was the firſt thing propounded, I proceed in the ſecond place,

2. To ſhew in general the Bounds and Limits which are ſet and preſcribed to this Paſſion by Virtue of the Meekneſs here in the Text enjoyned and commended; *bleſſed are the meek:* or what Degrees of Anger are, and what are not conſiſtent with Meekneſs: when and how far a meek

Man may be angry; and on what Occaſions, and in what Degree a Man cannot be angry without tranſgreſſing the Rules of Meekneſs, and conſequently forfeiting all Claim and Title to the Bleſſing and Reward here promiſed to the *meek*. *Bleſſed are the meek for they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

And there are four general Rules for the regulating and moderating the Paſſion of Anger, which *Meekneſs* preſcribes, and obliges us to obſerve. *Viz.* (1.) Not to be angry at all *when we ought not.* (2.) Not to be *ſooner angry*, (3.) Not to be *more angry*; and (4.) Not to be *longer angry* than is reaſonable.

(1.) Not to be angry at all, *when we ought not*, or when it is not reaſonable to be angry.

And there are four Caſes eſpecially wherein we may be ſaid to be angry when we ought not; *viz.*

1. When we are angry *without any cauſe at all.* This indeed is what no Man will ever own, nor perhaps does ever perceive in himſelf, that he is angry without a Cauſe;

a Cauſe; but 'tis what we are all apt to diſcern and take notice of in others. Some, we all know, there are (tho' we will not grant our ſelves to be of that Number) who are in general peeviſh and fretful; who are always apt to take things in the worſt part, and to interpret as Injuries and Affronts offer'd to them, ſuch Speeches or Actions of others as were never meant or deſign'd as ſuch. There are (we all know) ſome People who may truly be ſaid to be angry and waſpiſh; who were never, or hardly ever, known to be pleas'd and in good Humour: who are ever angry, at every thing, and with every Body, though they know not why: who if you ſay or do this thing are angry, and yet would have been as angry if you had ſaid or done quite otherwiſe: who whatever Courſe you take to humour and oblige them, will ſtill be as much out of Humour as if they had been in the higheſt manner diſoblig'd and affronted.

Now that ſuch froward and touchy People as theſe are clearly deſtitute of the Spirit of Meekneſs here ſpoken of, is ſo very evident

evident that I ſuppoſe I ſhall not need to uſe any Words to prove it.

Of theſe therefore I ſhall only add this one thing; that as they have not the Virtue of Meekneſs, ſo neither are they capable of the Bleſſedneſs and Reward which belongs to it. They cannot be *bleſſed*, as our *Saviour* here ſays the *meek* are, becauſe they always carry a Hell with them in their own Breaſts; they can't be bleſſed becauſe they are their own Vexers and Tormentors. Neither can they *inherit the Earth*, *i. e.* enjoy ſo much Happineſs in the Poſſeſſion of the good things of this World as others may; for though they ſhould be put into Poſſeſſion of the whole Earth, yet being of this peeviſh and fretful Temper they would not be able to take any Joy in or receive any Pleaſure from their ample Inheritance: but rather, the more they had of the World, the more Perſons there were in ſubjection to them, and the more People they had to deal with; ſo many more Occaſions would they have of being fretted and diſpleaſed. Such Men can never be happy, becauſe they

they are reſolved to make themſelves unhappy: they mean (if they mean any thing at all) to vex others by their Anger; but the greateſt Vexation of all is their own; and tho' they are indeed uneaſy enough, and more than enough, to others; yet by their continual Peeviſhneſs and Frettings, they become ten times more uneaſy to themſelves than to thoſe who are about them. For when any Perſon is known, and taken notice of to be of a fretful and waſpiſh Temper, they who have no Buſineſs with him will generally ſhun his Converſation, and they who have to deal with him, will quickly learn to diſ-regard his Anger: but, in the mean time, the Man himſelf is render'd very uneaſy by his own fretting and vexing at every thing; nay, and it oftentimes adds not a little to his Uneaſineſs, to obſerve how light others make of his Anger, how very little they are vexed by it.

2. We are alſo angry when we ought not, (and do thereby tranſgreſs the *Precept of Meekneſs)* when we are angry *without ſufficient Cauſe*; when every ſlight

ſlight Provocation, or petty Affront, puts us into a Paſſion. Nothing indeed can juſtify our being angry at all, but ſomething that is great and conſiderable, ſomewhat wherein either the Glory of God, or the publick Good, or ſome very great Intereſt of our own is concerned. But to be angry for every Trifle, as it is inconſiſtent with Meekneſs, ſo it is with Charity too; one Property of which, as the *Apoſtle* teaches us, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 5. is, that it *is not eaſily provoked.* To be angry upon any ſlight Occaſion is very near as bad and blame-worthy as to be angry without an Occaſion; and in the Courſe of this World there are ſo many little things which every Day happen croſs to us, that if every croſs Accident be ſufficient to put us into a Paſſion, we ſhall never while we live be tolerably eaſy, either to our ſelves or to others. So that all which was ſaid before, concerning thoſe who are angry without Cauſe, may be applied to ſuch as theſe who are angry upon every trifling Occaſion. For theſe alſo, as they have not the Spirit of Meekneſs, ſo neither are they capable

capable of the Bleſſing and Reward of it; becauſe nothing can make them happy, who are ſo induſtrious to make themſelves miſerable. But,

3. We are alſo angry when we ought not, when we are *haſtily* and *ſuddenly driven into a Paſſion*, before we have taken time to conſider whether that which provoked us be a Cauſe ſufficient to juſtify our being angry, and whether our Anger will work or produce any good Effect. For when we ſuffer our ſelves to be tranſported into Paſſion, without Thought or Conſideration, we act like Brutes which have no Underſtanding; not like Men who have Reaſon given them on purpoſe to govern their Paſſions and Affections, and to keep them within the Bounds of Moderation. So that when we ſuffer our Paſſion to go before our Reaſon, and permit our ſelves to be angry, before we have conſider'd whether the Cauſe moving us thereto was ſufficient or not; tho' (as it may happen) the Cauſe was indeed ſufficient, and we had indeed good reaſon to be angry; yet becauſe we did not know this before

before, (having not taken ſufficient time to weigh and conſider it) our Anger is equally unreaſonable and unwarrantable, as if we had been angry without any Cauſe at all: for we were angry before we knew that we had ſufficient Cauſe for it; and our knowing afterwards that the Cauſe was ſufficient, will not ſerve to juſtify an Act which was done before.

4. *laſtly*, We are alſo angry when we ought not, and do thereby tranſgreſs the Precept of Meekneſs, when we are angry with thoſe whom we ought not to be angry with.

As for inſtance, when we are angry with God, as the Prophet *Jonah* was, who took it in ill part that his Gourd was wither'd, and that the Sun ſhone hot upon him. For how ſevere ſoever the Adminiſtrations of God's Providence may ſeem to us, yet conſidering that whatſoever befalls us by his Providence is order'd by a Being of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and by one who has an abſolute Right to diſpoſe of us, and deal with us as he pleaſeth; we ought quietly to ſubmit to his Will,

Will, according to the good Example of the holy *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. xxxix. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.*

Again: we are angry with thoſe we ought not, when we are angry with our Superiors; as, with our Governors, with our Parents, with our Maſters, and the like: even altho' it be for ſuch Provocations as would have been ſufficient to juſtify our Anger, in caſe they had been offer'd us by our Equals or Inferiors. And the reaſon of this is, becauſe they who are thus placed over us by the Providence of God, are in God's place to us, and have a Ray of his Power and Authority communicated to them: 'tis their part to command, and ours to obey; theirs to correct and puniſh, and ours to ſubmit to their Correction. And if they tranſgreſs their Duty, if they are angry with us, or puniſh us without Cauſe, they are anſwerable for their Fault to God, who gave them their Authority: but it is altogether againſt the Order of things, and would breed endleſs Confuſion in the World, that they

they who are put in Subjection to others ſhould be Judges in their own Cauſe; and take upon them to correct their Governors and Superiors for their Male-Adminiſtration of things; and to revenge the ſuppoſed Injuries which they receive from them. And thus we are plainly taught our Duty in holy Scripture, where Subjects are forbidden upon any account to *reſiſt* their Governors; and they who do ſo are expreſſly threaten'd with *Damnation*, *Rom.* xiii. 2. where Children are commanded to ſubmit to the Correction of their Parents; and Servants, even altho' unjuſtly reproved and found fault with, are enjoin'd to be *quiet*, and *not to anſwer again*, Tit. ii. 9.

Again: we are angry with thoſe we ought not, when we are angry with the *Brute Creatures*, eſpecially if it be with ſuch of them as appear not capable of Diſcipline and Inſtruction; and much rather ſtill; if we are angry with ſenſeleſs and inanimate things, for any Diſturbance which we receive from them. For nothing can be a juſt Cauſe of Anger but a Fault;

a Fault; and Creatures that have not Reaſon, and much more ſuch as have not Life and Senſe, cannot be guilty of a Fault; but they act according to their Nature, or as they are moved by other Cauſes: ſo that to be angry with them, for any Diſpleaſure which they do us, is plainly as unreaſonable as 'tis to no purpoſe: 'tis unreaſonable, becauſe there is no Fault in them; and 'tis to no purpoſe, becauſe they are not capable of Reproof or Correction; but fret we never ſo much, and be we never ſo angry, they'll ſtill go on to act according to their own Nature.

Again: we are alſo angry with thoſe we ought not, even when we are angry with ſuch as have Reaſon, and are capable of Reproof and Correction, (and whom at other times we might reaſonably be angry with; as, our own Children or Servants, or others who are in Subjection to us, when, I ſay, we are angry with them) merely for Miſchances and Overſights; for ſuch Accidents as (tho' hurtful to us, yet) could not by any Care of theirs be foreſeen or prevented. And this, for the Reaſon juſt

before given, *viz.* becauſe mere Miſchances and Overſights being the Effect either of Neceſſity, or of unavoidable Ignorance or Frailty, are no Faults, and nothing but a Fault is a juſt Cauſe or Occaſion of Anger.

Laſtly: we are angry with thoſe we ought not, when we are angry with one for the Fault of another; as, when we are angry with the Son, becauſe the Father has done us a Diskindneſs; or with the Father, becauſe the Son has injur'd or affronted us: for this is manifeſtly unjuſt, that one ſhould ſuffer for another's Faults; and thus to puniſh one for another was expreſſly forbidden by the Law, *Deut.* xxiv. 16.

And if it be unreaſonable to be angry, even with the Relations of thoſe who have done us Diſpleaſure, much more is it unreaſonable to be angry with every body for the ſake of one. And yet a great many ſuch People, we know there are in the World, who, if they be once made angry, vent their Diſpleaſure upon all who come near them, or have any thing to do with

with them; who, if they be once put into a Rage, make no Difference between the innocent and the guilty; and becauſe one Man has done them a Diskindneſs, are out of humour, and in a Paſſion, with all the World beſides; chiding their Children, rating their Servants, and flying in the Face of all who are in their way, tho' they are guilty of no Fault, but do their utmoſt to pleaſure them in every thing; and laying about them like Madmen, and ſtriking indifferently all whom they can light upon, whether they be Foes or Friends.

And thus much of the firſt Reſtraint which Meekneſs lays upon the Paſſion of Anger: It makes us not to be angry at all when we ought not; not without Cauſe, nor with thoſe who have not given us juſt Provocation. And the great Sinfulneſs and Danger of the contrary Practice, our *Saviour* has clearly taught, [at *V.* 22. of this Chapter,] *Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, thou ſhalt not kill, and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment; but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with*

his Brother, without a Cauſe, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment. Where the ſame Puniſhment being threaten'd by our *Saviour*, to ſuch as are angry without a Cauſe, which was before threaten'd to Murderers; it is implied, that the Guilt of cauſeleſs Anger is, in God's Account, not much inferior to that of Murder. But,

(2.) Another general Rule for the moderating the Paſſion of Anger, which Meekneſs preſcribes and enforces on our Practice, is, not to be ſooner angry than we ought, be the Cauſe of our Anger never ſo juſt and reaſonable. And to this purpoſe we are exhorted by St. *James*, to be *ſlow to Wrath*, Jam. i. 19. and by the *wiſe Man*, *not* to *be haſty in our Spirit to be angry, becauſe Anger reſteth in the Boſom of Fools*, Eccleſ. vii. 9.

Now we are then too haſty to be angry, not only when (as was ſaid before) we ſuffer our ſelves to be tranſported into a Paſſion, without conſidering the Juſtneſs of the Cauſe; but alſo when, be the Cauſe never ſo juſt, we take fire immediately, and grow preſently into a Flame, before we

we have conſidered to what good purpoſe our Anger will ſerve, and before we have directed it to a right end; which muſt be either the Glory of God, or the Prevention of Sin, or the procuring ſome great good to, or the averting ſome great evil from our ſelves, or our Neighbours; and alſo before we have conſider'd whether our Anger be neceſſary for theſe Purpoſes, and whether the ſame good Ends might not be brought about as well without our being angry: for if they might, it is manifeſtly a very fooliſh thing for a Man to diſorder and diſcompoſe himſelf, (as he muſt needs do, in ſome meaſure, by being angry) to no purpoſe, and without Proſpect of procuring good thereby to himſelf or others. And therefore the *wiſe Man* ſays, *Prov.* xiv. 17. that *he that is ſoon angry dealeth fooliſhly*; *i. e.* in being ſoon angry he ſhews himſelf not to be a wiſe Man, all whoſe Actions and Paſſions are govern'd by Reaſon; for he plainly ſhews that his Paſſions have the maſtery over him, and that his Reaſon is too weak to govern and reſtrain them.

And as ſuch haſtineſs to be angry is a ſign of great Folly, ſo it is alſo an Inſtance of great Uncharitableneſs; for *Charity*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *ſuffereth long, and is kind*, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. and *Charity beareth all things*, ℣. 7. Did we but love our Neighbour as our ſelves, we ſhould bear with his Follies as long as we do with our own; and then indeed we ſhould bear with them long enough: we ſhould be as backward to fall out and be angry with him, as we are to be angry with our ſelves; and if we were ſo, there would not be half that Anger in the World which there now is.

And in thus bearing long with thoſe who provoke or injure us, before we are mov'd to Diſpleaſure againſt them, we ſhould ſhew much more Power and Greatneſs than we do in taking the ſevereſt Revenge: for the weakeſt Man may eaſily find an Opportunity to be reveng'd of his Enemy; but he is truly a ſtrong Man who has the maſtery of himſelf, and has ſo much Power over his own Paſſions, as not to take his Revenge when he has a fair

fair Opportunity of doing it, and could do it without danger of hurting himſelf. And to this agrees that Saying of *Solomon*, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is ſlow to Anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.*

(3.) Another Reſtraint which is laid upon the Paſſion of Anger, by the Virtue of Meekneſs, is, that in thoſe Caſes wherein it is allowable for us to be angry, Meekneſs keeps our Anger within due Bounds, and ſuffers us not to be more angry than is reaſonable.

And then we are more angry than it is fit and reaſonable we ſhould be, upon any Provocation whatſoever.

1. When our Paſſion is ſo great as to deprive us of the Uſe of our Reaſon, as it many times does thoſe who are of angry and cholerick Tempers; who, when they are enrag'd, know not well what they either ſay or do, but act and ſpeak like Men diſtracted, and void of all Reaſon, and for the time differ nothing at all from Madmen.

2. Our Anger, altho' it ſhould not thus tranſport us beyond all Bounds, is nevertheleſs greater than it ever ought to be, in caſe it be ſo violent as to diſcompoſe and ruffle our own Spirits, ſo that we are not fit for Prayer, or other Duties of Religion; nor are able to attend our Buſineſs, and manage our Affairs in the World, with Diligence and Diſcretion.

3. Our Anger is alſo greater than it ſhould be, when it is not proportionate to the Occaſion; as, when we are very angry for a ſmall Fault, being, it may be, as much provok'd by a Word miſplac'd, by an unkind Look, or ſome petty Affront, as it would be reaſonable for us to be by the greateſt Injury.

4. Laſtly, we are then more angry than we ever ought to be, when, not contented to have inflicted ſuch Puniſhment upon the Perſon who has provoked us as is ſufficient for his Correction and our own Reparation, we ſtill continue to bear Malice and Hatred towards him, to wiſh and deſign him evil; and nothing leſs will ſatisfy us but to be fully reveng'd upon him,

him, and to make him ſuffer the ſame or as great an evil as we have ſuffer'd by his Fault; and this, merely to gratify our own ill Nature, altho' we can propoſe no good either to him, or to any one elſe, or even to our ſelves, thereby.

When our Anger proceeds to this height, whatever the Occaſion of it was, it then plainly exceeds the Bounds both of Reaſon and Religion.

Firſt of Reaſon; for what can be more unreaſonable than to take Delight in putting another Man to Pain? Or in ſeeing him in Miſery, when it tends to no good purpoſe at all, and when there is no honeſt End ſerv'd by it?

It is alſo, ſecondly, no leſs contrary to Religion, which (as I have ſhewn before) ſtrictly forbids all Revenge, and commands us rather to ſuffer many Injuries than to return one.

(4.) Laſtly: another Reſtaint, which Meekneſs lays upon the Paſſion of Anger, is, that it ſuffers us not to be longer angry than we ought to be; and that (at the moſt, and whatſoever the Provocation was)

was) ought to be but a little while, according to that Exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 26. *Be angry, and ſin not; let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath.* Our Anger, how juſt ſoever, ought at moſt to continue no longer than till the next return of Prayers; becauſe if we do not againſt that time lay aſide our Paſſion, and become in Charity with our Brother who has offended us, our Prayers inſtead of procuring God's Bleſſing upon us will become Sin to us, and rather draw down his Curſe. For when we pray to God to *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*; if indeed we have not at that time forgiven them, but do ſtill bear Anger and Malice towards them, we do, in repeating this Petition, plainly mock God, and curſe our ſelves; and do in effect pray that he will not forgive us. And therefore the *Apoſtle* preſcribes it as a neceſſary Condition of making our Prayers accepted and availing, in 1 *Tim.* ii. 8. that we ſhould *lift up holy Hands, without Wrath.* And our *Saviour*, in like manner, directs us at ℣. 24.

of

of this Chapter, not to preſume to offer up our Gift or Sacrifice of Atonement to God for our own Sins, until we are in Charity with our Neighbour. *Leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.*

And this is no hard Leſſon to a Man who is of a meek, quiet, and humble Spirit; who, as he is not apt to take things in ill part, nor to be eaſily provoked by every Affront; ſo if he be injured he will be ready to forgive his offending Brother, *not* only *ſeven times*, *but* even *ſeventy times ſeven*, if he as often confeſſes his Offences, and begs Pardon for it, according to the Command of our *Lord*, in *Matth.* xviii. 22.

And thus now having ſhewn in general the Bounds and Limits which are preſcrib'd to the Paſſion of Anger, by the Virtue of Meekneſs; or what Degrees of Anger are, and what are not conſiſtent with the Meekneſs here enjoyned and commended. I ſhould for the farther Explication of the Nature

Nature of this excellent Grace proceed in the third Place,

3. To ſhew more particularly the Acts and Exerciſes of this Virtue, or how a meek Man, who has the Command and Maſtery over his Paſſion, will behave himſelf in moſt of the Conditions and Circumſtances of human Life, and in the ſeveral Relations wherein he ſtands to others.

But becauſe the handling of this Point, and what remains beſides, would take up too much time at preſent, I ſhall defer the diſcourſing thereof till another Day.

THE

THE NATURE OF MEEKNESS EXPLAINED: AND THE Bleſſedneſs of the Meek.

DISCOURSE VI.

The Nature of Meekneſs explain'd: and the Bleſſedneſs of the Meek.

MATTH. v. 5.

Bleſſed are the Meek: for they ſhall inherit the Earth.

I Have already begun a Diſcourſe on theſe Words, in which I propoſed to obſerve this Method.

I. To ſhew who are the Perſons here pronounced bleſſed, *the meek:* and,

II. to ſhew both wherein their preſent Bleſſedneſs conſiſts, and what will be their Reward, and the Claim and Title which they have to the Promiſe that is here made them; *Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

I. I pro-

I. I propoſed to ſhew who are the Perſons here ſpoken of, and pronounced bleſſed; *the meek*; *bleſſed are the meek.*

And in general, a meek Man, I told you, is one who is mild and gentle, of a calm and quiet Diſpoſition; a ſweet-temper'd, or a good-natur'd Man; he is one who is not apt to take fire, who is not prone to Anger, who is not given to Revenge. A meek Man is one who can take Injuries and Affronts without fretting or Impatience, but will be ſure never to do an Injury, or give an Affront to any Man: he is one who has the maſtery of his Paſſion, and keeps it always within the Bounds of Decency and Reaſon; one, who tho' he can ſhew Anger when there is juſt Cauſe for it, yet never ſuffers it to grow to ſuch a height and degree, as either to diſcompoſe and diſorder himſelf, or to be troubleſome or injurious to his Neighbours. This is the general Notion of Meekneſs.

For the farther and more particular Explanation of the Nature of which Virtue, I propoſed to do theſe three things.

1. To

1. To ſhew what Anger is, and what are the ſeveral Degrees of it; in the moderating of which, the Virtue of Meekneſs is chiefly exerciſed.

2. To ſhew in general the Bounds and Limits which the Virtue of Meekneſs does preſcribe to the Paſſion of Anger; or what Anger, or Degrees of Anger, are innocent and lawful, and what not. And,

3. *Laſtly*, To ſhew more particularly the Acts and Exerciſes of this Grace, or Virtue of Meekneſs; or how a meek Man (who has the maſtery over his Paſſions, and is careful to moderate and govern them by Reaſon) will behave himſelf in moſt of the Conditions and Circumſtances of human Life, and in the ſeveral Relations wherein he ſtands to others.

And, 1. As to the Nature of Anger in general: I told you it might be defined, a Deſire to inflict ſome Evil or Penalty on another, in Conſideration of ſome Evil or Injury which he has done to us: and the Degrees of Anger depend either upon the Nature of that Evil which we deſire to inflict upon the Perſon who has diſpleas'd us,

or elſe upon the Meaſure of our Deſire to inflict the ſame.

And, 2. As to the Bounds and Limits which are ſet by the Virtue of Meekneſs to this Paſſion, I mentioned theſe four: 1. That he who is of a meek Spirit will not be angry at all when there is no juſt Occaſion: And 2. That how juſt ſoever the Occaſion be, he will not be ſooner angry: Nor, 3. More angry: Nor, 4. Longer angry than he ought to be. And when it is that we offend, in any of theſe Reſpects, I have already ſhewed at large.

I proceed now to the third thing propos'd, in order to the farther Explication of the Nature of this Virtue, *viz.*

3. To ſhew more particularly, how a Man who is of a meek and quiet Diſpoſition will behave himſelf in moſt of the Conditions and Circumſtances of human Life, and in the ſeveral Relations wherein he ſtands to others.

For Meekneſs is a Virtue which has an Influence upon our whole Converſation, and will ſhew it ſelf in almoſt every Action of our Lives; and tho' indeed, the chief Exerciſe

Exerciſe thereof conſiſts in the moderating the Paſſion of Anger, in ſuch manner as has been before ſhewed; yet there are divers other Acts and Exerciſes thereof, not eaſily reducible to that Head, by which Meekneſs of Spirit will not fail to ſhew forth it ſelf.

Now the Conditions and Circumſtances of human Life, are either Proſperity or Adverſity; and the Perſons we are related to, are either God or Men. I ſhall therefore now briefly ſhew, how a Man who is of a meek and quiet Spirit will behave himſelf in each of theſe Conditions, and in each of theſe Relations. And,

1. How he will behave himſelf in each of the Conditions of Life before-mentioned; *viz.* Proſperity and Adverſity.

1. In Proſperity. And if a Man be in a proſperous and flouriſhing Condition, abounding in Wealth and Honour, and having all that his Heart can wiſh; yet if he be of a meek quiet and humble Temper of Mind, he will not be puffed up by his Proſperity, he will not think the better of himſelf becauſe of his outward Cir-

cumſtances, he will look upon the good things which he poſſeſſes as the free Gift of God, and not as the Reward of his own Merit, or the Purchaſe of his own Induſtry: he will conſider that as much as he excels others in theſe outward Gifts of Fortune, ſo much they may excel him in the inward Gifts of Grace, in Knowledge, in Wiſdom, in Piety, in Virtue: he will not be ſo taken up with the Contemplation and Admiration of his own Excellencies, but that he will readily diſcern and freely acknowledge the Excellencies of others; and glorifie God, the Author and Giver thereof: he will conſequently behave himſelf towards thoſe who with regard to outward Circumſtances are of inferior Condition, as to his Brethren, with all Friendlineſs, Courteſy and Affability; and moreover, as he has freely received of God great Plenty of all good things, he will be free in communicating the ſame to others for their Good, endeavouring by all the means he can to oblige and gratifie all Men to the uttermoſt of his Power. Thus a meek and good temper'd

Man

Man will behave himſelf in a proſperous Condition. And,

2. If he be in Adverſity, being of a meek and humble Spirit, he will be contented with his Condition, he will be eaſy and quiet under all his Misfortunes and Afflictions: he will not envy thoſe who are in a more flouriſhing Condition, but rather will rejoice thereat: though he himſelf be in Want or Pain, he will yet be glad that others are at eaſe: he would rather be miſerable alone, than have Company in his Misfortunes; he will not, when he needs help from others, think it below him to receive Help or Relief from them, but will willingly accept of, and thankfully acknowledge the ſame. In fine, be his Condition never ſo ſad and calamitous, he will endeavour to be as eaſy to himſelf and to all others, as he poſſibly can be under it.

I proceed now in the ſecond place,

2. To ſhew how a meek Man will behave himſelf in his ſeveral Relations, either to God or to Men. And,

1. In relation to God. He who is of a

meek and humble Spirit will be willing to be inſtructed by God, and yield a ready Belief to all divine Revelations, and a chearful Obedience to all the divine Commands. Meekneſs, in relation to God, is a prompt Submiſſion of our ſelves to the Wiſdom and Will of God; and that, not only to believe what he teaches, and to undertake what he enjoyns, but alſo with Patience and Chearfulneſs to ſuffer whatever he is pleas'd to inflict. A meek Man never murmurs or repines at any of the Diſpenſations of God's Providence towards him, but as he receives all his good things at the Hands of God with Thankfulneſs, and acknowledges the ſame to be the free Gifts of the divine Bounty; ſo he receives evil things at the ſame Hands with entire Reſignation of himſelf to God's Will, ſaying with old *Ely*, *it is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*: or as the *Pſalmiſt* was, he will *be dumb*, he will *not* dare to *open his Mouth* to mutter or complain, when he conſiders that it is *God's doing*. He who is of a meek Spirit, and lowly in his own Conceit, will pro-

profoundly venerate the infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, and readily and eaſily believe that that Condition or State of Life which it pleaſes the divine Providence to place him in, how low and calamitous ſoever it be, is better for him than any other which he could have choſen would have been. This is Meekneſs in relation to God.

2. Meekneſs in relation to Men conſiſts in general, in a quiet, peaceable, courteous and friendly Diſpoſition of Mind and Deportment of outward Behaviour towards all thoſe whom we have any thing to do with; and that, whether they be our Superiors, our Equals, or our Inferiors; whether they be our Friends, or our Enemies, or indifferently affected towards us.

But the Nature and Exerciſe of Meekneſs towards Men will more clearly appear, if we conſider theſe ſeveral Relations before mentioned more diſtinctly.

1. Then, Meekneſs in relation to our Superiors or thoſe above us, eſpecially if they have Authority and Dominion over us, conſiſts in owning their Authority, in

yielding ready Obedience to their lawful Commands, in quietly bearing with their Peeviſhneſs or Croſſneſs, and in patiently ſubmitting to their Reproofs and Corrections, even altho' we are not conſcious to our ſelves that we have done any thing to deſerve their Diſpleaſure.

2. Meekneſs, in relation to our Equals, conſiſts in acknowledging their Equality with us, in not contending with them for Place or Precedence, in allowing them free Liberty of thinking and ſpeaking their own way, in not pragmatically prying into their Secrets or meddling with their Concerns, in not aſſuming to our ſelves Dominion and Superiority over them, and laſtly, in readily diſcharging all Offices of Courteſy, Humanity, and Charity towards them according to our Power.

3. Meekneſs in relation to Inferiors, eſpecially thoſe who are plac'd in Subjection to us, as Subjects, Children, Servants, and the like, conſiſts in uſing that Authority which God has given us over them with Temper and Moderation; and chiefly for

for the Good of thoſe whom we have the Rule and Command of.

He who is of a meek Spirit will never impoſe upon ſuch as are ſubject to him any Commands which are hard, rigorous and tyrannical, merely for the Exerciſe of his own Authority, or to make Proof of the Power which he has over them.

He will not *lord it over God's Heritage*, (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſes it) and take upon him as if they who are below him were made only to be his Slaves and Vaſſals, and to advance his Greatneſs; whereas indeed the true Reaſon of his being made greater than they, and plac'd in Authority over them, was for the Good of thoſe who are put in Subjection to him. Conſidering which therefore a meek Man will not value himſelf much upon the Account of his Greatneſs, and the Power which God has given him over others; it being only a *Talent* committed to his truſt, of which he muſt one Day give an Account to his great Maſter. Though he be placed in an higher Station than they, he will not therefore think himſelf a better Man than they

they are, and behave himſelf proudly and arrogantly towards them; but on the contrary he will always treat them as his Brethren, and as Fellow-Servants with him of the ſame great God, with all Friendlineſs and Courteſy.

Moreover, being of a meek Spirit, he will give them all Freedom of Acceſs to him, and readily hear their Complaints and ſpeedily redreſs their Grievances, whenever they are made known to him. Again,

Though what he commands for the Good of thoſe who are committed to his care, he will expect ſhould be done, for otherwiſe he would be unfaithful to his Truſt; yet he will not be ſuch a rigorous Exactor of a punctual Obedience to all his Orders, as to impute to his Subjects, as Faults, all their Frailties and Overſights, when he has reaſon to think they were the Effects only of Ignorance, Weakneſs, or Inadvertency, and not of preſumptuous Contempt of his Authority. What Faults, of ſuch as are under his Power, are fairly capable of Excuſe, he himſelf will excuſe; and when any Fault ſeems otherwiſe to him,

him, he will not however immediately proceed to puniſh it; but will rather ſtay a while to ſee if he that committed it will of his own accord, or by fair means, be brought to a Senſe and Acknowledgment of his Crime and to Repentance for it: and he will be much better pleaſed to have this good Effect brought about without Correction than with it.

But if fair means will not do, and he finds it neceſſary to take the Rod into his Hand, and to correct and puniſh the Offence, he will do it however with as little Anger and Choler as is poſſible; and will by his meek and gentle Temper be inclin'd rather to abate ſomewhat: to be ſure he will not inflict a greater Puniſhment than the Crime deſerves.

And in inflicting ſuch Puniſhments as are neceſſary, his ſole Aim and Deſign will be the Good of the Perſon he corrects, and the Prevention of the like Faults in others, and not the gratifying of his own Revenge.

And laſtly; whenſoever the offending Perſon ſhall return to his Duty, and beg

pardon

pardon for his Fault, whether it be before Correction or after, he will readily forgive him, and take him into the ſame place in his Love and Favour which he had before.

In theſe and ſuch like Particulars conſiſts the Exerciſe and Practice of Meekneſs towards our Servants, Subjects, Children, or others who are our Inferiors, or in Subjection to us.

But thoſe we have to deal with, and towards all whom we are to exerciſe Meekneſs (according to that of the *Apoſtle*, *Tit.* iii. 2. *Shewing all Meekneſs unto all Men)* may (as was intimated before) be conſidered yet in another reſpect; *viz.* either as Friends, or as Enemies, or elſe as Perſons indifferently affected towards us. And when I ſhall have briefly ſhewn the Offices of Meekneſs towards others in each of theſe reſpects, I ſuppoſe this, with what has been ſaid before, will be ſufficient to explain the Nature of this Virtue.

1. Then, I ſhall ſhew what are the Offices of Meekneſs, or wherein conſiſts that Meekneſs, and how it ſhould expreſs it ſelf, which we are to exerciſe towards

our

our Friends. And the Acts and Offices of Meekneſs towards our Friends, are ſuch as theſe. To be careful to do nothing which may diſoblige them and alienate their Affections from us; to behave our ſelves in all reſpects friendly and lovingly towards them, readily doing for them any Kindneſs which lies in our Power; to bear with their Infirmities, and to take in the beſt ſenſe all their Words or Actions which may be thought to be of doubtful meaning; to gratifie their innocent Deſires, and comply with their (not unreaſonable) Humours; to reprove them, when they deſerve Reproof, with all Gentleneſs and Tenderneſs, and to take in friendly part their chriſtian Advices and Admonitions to us.

2. Meekneſs towards ſuch as are our Enemies conſiſts in gently paſſing by and readily forgiving their lighter Injuries; and when their Injuries are ſo great that we can't well bear them, but judge it reaſonable to ſeek for Redreſs by Law, then in proſecuting our own Right without any Malice

Malice or Hatred towards the Perſons of thoſe who have done us wrong.

Meekneſs alſo obliges us, even while the Enmity laſts, to be ready to do our Enemy any office of Humanity, if he be *hungry* to *feed* him, and if he be *thirſty* to *give him drink*; and when Satisfaction is made us, or the Man repents of his Fault, heartily to forgive, and ſo far as we can, utterly to forget all former Wrongs.

But above all, it obliges us *not* to *render evil for evil, or railing for railing*; not to return one Injury for another; neither to execute, nor ſo much as to meditate Revenge againſt thoſe who have done us the greateſt Wrongs; no not although we believe them ready to do us ſtill greater if it lies in their way.

3. Laſtly. As to thoſe who are neither our Friends nor our Enemies, but of a middle Nature, and are indifferently affected towards us; we exerciſe Meekneſs towards them, when we are induſtrious to avoid all Occaſions of Quarelling and Contention; when we are not angry with them without cauſe, and are careful to give them

no

no cauſe to be angry with us; when we live with them after a friendly and neighbourly manner, mutually doing and receiving Offices of common Kindneſs. And laſtly, when we gently paſs by, and take no notice of ſmall Treſpaſſes committed againſt us; but are at all times ready to beg Pardon, and to make Satisfaction even for the lighteſt Injuries done by us to them.

And thus now having, as I ſuppoſe by what has been ſaid in this and the former Diſcourſe, ſufficiently explain'd the Nature of this Virtue of Meekneſs, and thereby ſhewn who are the Perſons here in the Text pronounced bleſſed; *bleſſed are the meek*; which was the firſt thing propounded, I proceed in the ſecond place to incite and encourage you to the Practice of this Virtue.

II. By ſhewing wherein conſiſts the preſent Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are of ſuch a meek, gentle, and quiet Diſpoſition; and alſo what Aſſurance they have of the Reward which is here promiſed them; the Inheritance of the Earth. *Bleſſed are the meek,*

for

for they ſhall inherit the Earth. And

1. Wherein conſiſts their preſent Bleſſedneſs; *Bleſſed are the meek.* And they are bleſſed above other Men in ſundry Reſpects; particularly theſe two.

(1.) In that they have the Command of their Paſſions, and are not (as turbulent and wrathful Men are) led thereby into the greateſt Follies and Extravagancies. They are as much happier than other Men, as it is better to be ſober, and in our right Wits, than 'tis to be wild, and mad, and frantick. Indeed thus to overcome and maſter our Paſſion, is a greater Inſtance of true Valour and Fortitude, and a juſter ground of glorying, than 'tis to overcome by Force the moſt powerful Enemies. And ſo we are taught by *Solomon*, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is ſlow to Anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.*

(2.) The meek Man is alſo more bleſſed than others, becauſe he is always at eaſe and peace in his own Mind. And beſides, the Foundation of his Happineſs is within himſelf, ſo that it is not in any other

ther Man's Power to rob him of it. He is happy, becauſe nothing which Man can do to him can diſquiet him, or diſturb his Tranquillity: he is above all their Malice, and can deſpiſe all their Wrath, and will not be vex'd and uneaſy in his Mind, tho' they have never ſuch a Mind to make him ſo.

Whereas, on the contrary, a Man who is of a wrathful and quarelſome Temper, is at every one's Mercy to be made unhappy, when, and as much as they pleaſe. 'Tis in every one's Power to ruffle and diſcompoſe his Mind, to render him uneaſy and diſcontented, to make him ſad and melancholy. Good Reaſon therefore had our Saviour to pronounce the meek Man *bleſſed*, for bleſſed indeed above all Men he is; he is more bleſſed from himſelf, from his own happy Temper, than any Man of another Temper can be from any thing without him: he would be bleſſed, altho' his Goodneſs ſhould entitle him to no other Reward; Meekneſs being indeed its own Reward, it being Virtue and Happineſs both in one.

But there is alſo a great Reward promiſed to this Virtue, and 'tis chiefly upon the account of their Title to that, that our *Saviour* here pronounces the meek to be bleſſed; *Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth.* And this was the next thing I propounded to do, *viz.*

2. To ſhew what Aſſurance the meek have of the Reward which is here promis'd them.

But before I go about to do this, it will be needful firſt of all to ſhew *what* the *Reward is*, or what our *Saviour* here meant by *the Inheritance of the Earth.*

And this Saying, *they ſhall inherit the Earth*, may, as I have intimated already, be taken either in a natural or in a ſpiritual Senſe.

Taking it in the literal or natural Senſe, by the Inheritance of the Earth here promiſed to the meek is meant an eaſy and comfortable Life here in this World.

Taking it in the ſpiritual Senſe, thereby is meant a Portion or Inheritance in Heaven.

And

And in which ſoever of theſe Senſes we underſtand it, our *Saviour*'s Words are true; for both theſe are the Rewards of Meekneſs, and the meek Perſon has good Aſſurance given him of receiving them both; *i. e.* of being happy both in this World, and in the next.

(1.) I ſay, if we take the Words in their literal or natural Senſe, and underſtand by the Inheritance of the Earth, an eaſy and comfortable State of Life here in this World; in this Senſe our *Saviour*'s Words are true: for this is indeed one part of the Reward of Meekneſs, and 'tis what every meek Man has as good Aſſurance of as he can have of any thing here in this World; and that not only by virtue of this Promiſe, nor only by God's ſpecial Bleſſing and Providence, but alſo in the natural Courſe of things.

For a meek Man (according to the Character and Deſcription given of him in the foregoing Diſcourſe) is plainly the moſt harmleſs and inoffenſive, the moſt kind and obliging Man to all Perſons, of any

upon the Face of the Earth. And he who is careful to make no Enemies to himſelf by any unkind or injurious dealing; and withal makes it his Buſineſs, by ready Forgiveneſs, and by all kind and good Offices to appeaſe and render friendly to himſelf all who are without Cauſe his Enemies, (ſuch an one) muſt needs, in the natural Courſe of things, in all human Probability, have fewer Enemies than another Man, who is not ſo inoffenſive and obliging. Nay, it is ſtrange if ſuch an one ſhould have any Enemies at all. For, as St. *Peter* ſays, 1 Epiſt. iii. 13. *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is good?* However, if ſuch a Man ſhould have any Enemies, 'tis not much to be fear'd that he ſhould have many. A Man of this kind, benign, and loving Temper, muſt needs be generally belov'd and reſpected by all who know him; and the fewer Enemies a Man has, and the better he is belov'd by his Neighbours, the more likely is he to paſs away his Days here eaſily and comfortably.

fortably. For moſt of the great Calamities of human Life are cauſed either directly or indirectly, by Men who are ill affected towards us; and he who can make Men his Friends, is thereby rid of his worſt Enemies; and bating the common Accidents of Sickneſs and Loſſes, and the like, happening by what we call Chance, is ſure to paſs away his Days as happily as can be expected.

Thus the meek Man ſhall *inherit the Earth*, taking the Phraſe in its literal and common Senſe; he will, according to the ordinary Courſe of things, live as happily here in this mortal State, as he can reaſonably hope to do in a wicked, troubleſome, and vexatious World: to be ſure, much more happily than any Man can do who is haughty and peeviſh, quarelſome and revengeful.

But this Promiſe, that *the meek ſhall inherit the Earth*, if by Earth we underſtand this Earth, this World in which we now live, and the good things of it; muſt be underſtood, as all other temporal

Promiſes of the Goſpel are to be underſtood, with an Exception of the Croſs, and of the Caſe of Perſecution, by which God does ſometimes in his Wiſdom think fit to try the Faith and Patience of the beſt Men. And therefore, tho' this Senſe of the Text be good and true, we ought not to reſt here; but rather we ſhould underſtand the Word *Earth* in the Senſe wherein I ſupoſe our *Saviour* chiefly meant it, *i. e.* in its ſpiritual Senſe: it being moſt certainly our *Saviour*'s Intention, in theſe Words, to promiſe the like ſpiritual Bleſſing to the *meek*, which he had before promiſed to the *poor in Spirit*, and to them *that mourn*, when he ſaid *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, and *they ſhall be comforted*; and which he afterwards promiſes to ſuch as are endued with other Chriſtian Graces, under the Phraſes of, *they ſhall be filled*, *they ſhall obtain Mercy*, *they ſhall ſee God*, *they ſhall be called the Children of God*, and *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*.

For it may be conſider'd that theſe Words

Words of our *Saviour*, *the meek ſhall inherit the Earth*, are taken *verbatim* out of *Pſal.* xxxvii. 11. *The meek ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the Abundance of Peace.* Now the *Earth* there meant was the *Land of Canaan*, often called the *Earth* in holy Scripture; but the *earthly Canaan* was only a Type of the *heavenly Canaan*, and Heaven is the true *Land of Promiſe*, to which all the temporal Promiſes even in the Old Teſtament have reference: I ſay the Promiſes of the Law were moſt, if not all of them, temporal in their firſt meaning, but then they had alſo a farther Deſign: and the good Men, even of thoſe Days, look'd upon themſelves but *as Pilgrims and Strangers upon the Earth*, and long'd for and expected a better Countrey. And therefore, I think there can be no doubt but that this Promiſe of the Goſpel, which, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *Heb.* viii. 6. was *eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes* than the Law was, (there can be no doubt, I ſay, but that

this Promiſe of the Goſpel) ought much rather to be taken in a ſpiritual Senſe; and that Heaven, the true Land of Promiſe, is that in which our *Saviour* here promiſes that the meek ſhall have a Portion or Inheritance.

And if we take the Words in this ſpiritual Senſe, and underſtand by the Inheritance here promiſed, that *Inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, which is reſerved in Heaven for us*; to this alſo Meekneſs gives a moſt ſure Title. For St. *Peter* tells us, 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. that *a meek and quiet Spirit* is *an Ornament, which is, in the Sight of God, of great Price.* And a Grace which God ſo highly values, we may be ſure he will amply reward, with the Inheritance not only of *this Earth*, but alſo of *that new Heaven and Earth* which will be revealed at the Conſummation of all things. And that he will ſo do we are alſo expreſſly told by our *Saviour*, Matth. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart,*

Heart, and ſo ye ſhall find Reſt unto your Souls.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant to us all, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: To whom, &c.

THE

THE BLESSEDNESS OF HUNGRING and THIRSTING after RIGHTEOUSNESS.

DISCOURSE VII.

The Bleſſedneſs of hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs.

MATTH. v. 6.

Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

IN the third Verſe of this Chapter our *Saviour* had pronounced thoſe bleſſed who are *poor in Spirit*; in the fourth thoſe who *mourn*, in the fifth thoſe who are *meek*; and here in the Text, he proceeds to add another like Paradox, pronouncing thoſe bleſſed *which do hunger and thirſt*.

A Paradox indeed! or rather (ſome will ſay) a moſt notorious Untruth? For, taking the Words in the literal Senſe, how can

can they be happy, who do ſuffer Hunger and Thirſt, the two greateſt Torments of human Life? Or, if we take Hunger and Thirſt in a figurative Senſe, underſtanding thereby an earneſt Deſire of ſomething which we do greatly want, and without which we can't be happy; yet what is there more uneaſy than to deſire? The Accompliſhment of our Deſire may indeed make us happy, but ſurely the Deſire it ſelf can't make us ſo, or be thought to contribute towards it. We can't ſurely be happier only for deſiring, ſeeing that rather implies and ſuppoſes our preſent want of ſomewhat which is needful to make us happy; for if we had what we want, we ſhould no longer deſire it.

It is certainly true therefore that Bleſſedneſs can't conſiſt merely in deſiring any thing. So that I conceive theſe Words of our *Saviour*, *bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, are not to be underſtood abſolutely but comparatively.

I ſay, firſt they are not to be underſtood abſolutely, as if he had deſign'd to pronounce

pronounce thoſe compleatly bleſſed, *who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, only becauſe they deſire it, *i. e.* becauſe they are ſenſible that they want it, and that they can't be happy without it: for it is plain that their meer Deſire of it (which ſuppoſes their preſent want of it) can't render them compleatly happy; becauſe they would manifeſtly be more happy if they had what they want and deſire, in which caſe their Deſire of it would ceaſe. And there can be no doubt but that the *Spirits of juſt Men* already *made perfect* are in a much more happy State than they were in while, being here, they only *hunger'd and thirſted after Righteouſneſs*, *i. e.* than while they only deſired that Perfection which they have now attain'd. Beſides, if it were not ſo, the Words following in the Text would be contradictory to theſe; *bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled*; for if it were abſolutely an Happineſs to hunger and thirſt, then it would be an Unhappineſs to be filled; for he who is filled does

no

no longer hunger and thirſt; ſo that by being filled he would ceaſe to be bleſſed; and our *Saviour*'s Speech would have been more conſiſtent with it ſelf, if he had ſaid, bleſſed are they which do ſo hunger and thirſt, for they ſhall always continue ſo to hunger and thirſt as they do now.

It is plain therefore (as I ſaid farther) that the Bleſſedneſs which our *Saviour* here ſpeaks of is only a comparative Bleſſedneſs.

And the Compariſon may be underſtood to be deſign'd either between thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and thoſe who do not, tho' they have the ſame need of it which the others have; or elſe between thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and thoſe who hunger and thirſt after other things.

And if the firſt was what our *Saviour* deſign'd; the meaning of his Words, *bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, is as if he had ſaid; foraſmuch as in this ſinful and degenerate State into which Men are fallen, they have all

great

great want of Righteouſneſs, becauſe without it 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be happy; they are the moſt bleſſed of all this ſinful Race of Men, who are moſt ſenſible of this their want, who do moſt earneſtly deſire and moſt heartily endeavour to get themſelves reſtor'd to that State of Righteouſneſs from which they are fallen, and by which they ſhall render themſelves accepted to God; they who do thus hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs are more bleſſed than others, who being in the ſame want, are not ſo ſenſible of their want, and ſo do neither deſire nor endeavour to get a Supply of it.

Or if we ſuppoſe that the other was what our *Saviour* deſign'd; *viz.* to make a Compariſon between thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and thoſe who hunger and thirſt after other things, then the meaning of theſe Words is as if he had ſaid; foraſmuch as in this State of Weakneſs and Imperfection, there are many things which Men are in great want of, and which if they could obtain they think they ſhould be happy; in conſequence of

which they can't but earneſtly deſire and long for thoſe things wherein they place their Happineſs, whether they be Riches, or Honours, or Pleaſures, or the like; they are of all Men the moſt bleſſed, who neglecting theſe things, which the generality of Men do ſo greedily ſeek after, and plainly perceiving that true Happineſs does not conſiſt therein, but is to be obtain'd only by Righteouſneſs, *i. e.* only by approving themſelves to God in well-doing, do thereupon bend all their Deſires and Endeavours that way; ſeeking after Righteouſneſs with the ſame Keeneſs of Appetite wherewith a Man who is hungry or thirſty deſires his neceſſary Meat or Drink; and being as ſollicitous and induſtrious to obtain it (as being that without which they know they can't be happy) as other Men are to obtain Wealth or Honour or Pleaſure, or whatever elſe it is which they apprehend will be a means to make them happy.

And in both theſe Senſes our *Saviour*'s Words are moſt undoubtedly true, *bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righte-*

Righteouſneſs. For he is in truth more bleſſed who hungers and thirſts after Righteouſneſs than he who does not, it being a thing which all Men in this ſinful and degenerate State have need of in order to their Happineſs. And he who hungers and thirſts after Righteouſneſs is alſo more bleſſed than he who hungers and thirſts after any thing elſe. And of both theſe there is a very good Reaſon given at the cloſe of the Verſe; *for they ſhall be filled*; *i. e.* They ſhall be ſure both to obtain what they ſo earneſtly ſeek and deſire, and alſo to find all that Satisfaction therein which they could hope for or propoſe to themſelves. They are bleſſed becauſe their hearty Endeavours ſhall not be fruſtrated by their not being able to obtain what they deſir'd and ſought after; and they are alſo bleſſed, becauſe their Expectations ſhall not be diſappointed by their not finding in the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment thereof ſuch complete Happineſs as they look'd for. *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

In diſcourſing on which Words I ſhall do theſe two things.

I. I ſhall ſhew yet more fully and particularly who are the bleſſed Perſons here ſpoken of; or what it is to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*. And,

II. I ſhall ſhew wherein conſiſts both the preſent Bleſſedneſs and the future Reward of ſuch Perſons. *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

I. I ſhall ſhew who are the bleſſed Perſons here ſpoken of, who do *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*; or, what it is to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*. And for the explaining this it will be needful, 1. To enquire what is here meant by Righteouſneſs; and 2. What it is to hunger and thirſt after it.

1. What is here meant by Righteouſneſs.

And Righteouſneſs is two-fold; *viz.* either actual, perſonal, and inherent Righteouſneſs; or elſe, imputed Righteouſneſs; or what may well enough be underſtood to be meant by that Phraſe. Actual and inherent Righteouſneſs, is nothing elſe but a living

a living in ſincere and perfect Obedience to all the Laws of God: *He that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, 1 Joh. iii. 7. Imputed Righteouſneſs, or what may well enough be underſtood to be meant by that Phraſe, is our Juſtification and Acquittal by God, as righteous Perſons; when having ſincerely to the beſt of our Power endeavoured to diſcharge all thoſe Duties which God requires of us, God is pleaſed, thro' the Merits and Interceſſion of his dear Son, in whom he is well-pleaſed, to accept of our ſincere and hearty Endeavours, inſtead of exact Performance; and for the ſake of *Chriſt* to accept of us, and deal with us, as righteous Perſons; altho' in truth, after all our Endeavours, we have fallen ſhort in many things, and have not perform'd ſuch perfect and exact Obedience as was required of us.

And I ſee no Reaſon why we may not here in the Text take the Word *Righteouſneſs* in its largeſt Senſe, as comprehending both theſe; *i. e.* both Righteouſneſs properly ſo called, and alſo the Re-

ward of Righteouſneſs. For indeed both theſe ought to be the Objects of our Deſire and Endeavour; one as the End, and the other as the Means. We ought to deſire, with all Earneſtneſs, that our Sins may be pardoned, and that we may be juſtified and acquitted by God at the great Day; becauſe upon this Sentence of God our everlaſting Happineſs does depend. And, as a Means to obtain this Favour, (for 'tis to be obtain'd upon no other Terms) we ought alſo to deſire and endeavour to make our ſelves ſuch as God has promiſed to pardon and juſtify, *i.e.* to approve our ſelves to God by a hearty and ſincere Obedience to all his Commands, to the uttermoſt of our Power. Thus the *Apoſtle* ſays of himſelf, and other good Chriſtians, *Gal.* v. 5. *We thro' the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteouſneſs by Faith:* and our *Saviour* himſelf, who in my Text bids us to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*; in *Matth.* vi. 33. propoſes both Righteouſneſs and the Reward of Righteouſneſs, as two diſtinct Objects of our Deſire and Endeavour, and the one as the

the Means of the other: *Seek ye firſt* (or chiefly) *the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs.* And therefore ſeeing both theſe are the juſt Objects of a Chriſtian's Deſire, our *Saviour*, tho' he names only one of them in the Text, may yet reaſonably be ſuppos'd to have meant to comprehend the other under it; and by that *Righteouſneſs* which he here bids us to *hunger and thirſt after*, to have meant both that Righteouſneſs of our Perſons, whereby we ought to the utmoſt of our Power to endeavour to recommend our ſelves to God's Acceptance; and alſo that Approbation of our Perſons, as righteous, which thro' the Merits of *Chriſt* will be the certain Reward of this Endeavour; when God, at the laſt Day, ſhall acquit and juſtify as righteous Perſons, all thoſe who have ſincerely endeavoured after Righteouſneſs, altho' they have not been able to attain ſuch Perfection therein as they deſired.

Thus having ſeen what is here meant by *Righteouſneſs*, *viz.* both Sanctification and Juſtification, both Virtue and

the Reward of it; I proceed now in the ſecond place,

2. To enquire what it is to *hunger and thirſt after* it: *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs.*

And this Phraſe, tho' it be indeed figurative and metaphorical, yet is withal ſo very eaſy to be underſtood, that I preſume even the meaneſt Capacity cannot miſtake the Senſe of it; for when we are hungry we deſire Meat, and when we are thirſty we deſire Drink; and 'tis our Deſire of that, which we call *Hunger*, and of this, which we call *Thirſt:* therefore to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, is plainly nothing elſe but to deſire Righteouſneſs, in ſuch a manner as a hungry Man deſires Meat, and as he who is thirſty deſires Drink: Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs is a Deſire to obtain it, grounded upon ſuch an Opinion of the Neceſſity of it, in order to our well-being, as we have of the Neceſſity of Meat and Drink in order to preſerve Life.

Only it muſt be noted, (and that indeed's a thing which we ſhould do well to mark

mark and conſider) that Hunger and Thirſt are very craving Appetites, which will take no Denial till they are ſatisfied: ſo that by hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, muſt needs be meant an ardent and intenſe Deſire to obtain it; ſuch a Deſire as will not be ſatisfied without it; ſuch a Deſire as will put us upon trying all poſſible means, and uſing our utmoſt Endeavour to obtain what we long for.

For a Man who is truly hungry and thirſty, does not ſit ſtill with his Hands folded up, idly wiſhing that he had ſome Meat and Drink; but the keeneſs of his Appetite quickens his Invention to find out, and excites his Endeavour to put in practice immediately, ſuch Means as are conducing to obtain what he deſires, and makes him that he can never be at reſt till he has got the Meat and Drink which he wanted.

And 'tis only ſuch a Deſire of Righteouſneſs as this (as craving and importunate, and as operative and efficacious as that is, wherewith a Man who is almoſt famiſh'd with Hunger, and parch'd up with Drought, deſires that Meat and

Drink, with which if he be not ſoon ſupplied he knows he muſt in a little time unavoidably periſh; 'tis, I ſay, only ſuch an earneſt and operative Deſire of Righteouſneſs as this) who can entitle us to the Bleſſing of the Text, and aſſure us of the Reward of it. 'Tis not every Deſire of Righteouſneſs, but only a hungering and thirſting after it, to which this Bleſſing and Reward are annexed.

For I believe there is ſcarcely any Man who does not (with *Balaam*) wiſh that he may *die the Death of the Righteous*; and there are, I believe, very few who do not alſo ſometimes wiſh that they may live the Life of the Righteous. For they are plainly told in Scripture, that *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, and therefore that they may be happy they would be holy too; but then they would be ſo only by a wiſh: they would have Holineſs wrought in them by the almighty and irreſiſtible Power of God; they don't care for taking any Pains about it themſelves. If they could become good Men, and ſuch as God would delight in, without

without any Trouble of their own in mortifying and ſubduing their Luſts, and reſiſting thoſe ſtrong Temptations to Sin wherewith they are daily aſſaulted, they ſhould like it well enough; but their Deſire of Holineſs is not ſo earneſt as to rouze up their hearty Endeavour to obtain that which they ſay they deſire; and 'tis this faintneſs of their Deſire which is the Cauſe of its being ſucceſſleſs: for Righteouſneſs is not to be obtained by an idle Wiſh, or a cold Petition, or a faint Endeavour; but we muſt *run* that we may *obtain*, and we muſt *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtreight Gate:* we muſt contend fiercely, and fight manfully, againſt our ſpiritual Adverſaries, or elſe we ſhall never overcome them. And that this is the true and only Method to obtain Righteouſneſs, we are plainly taught by the *wiſe Man*, in *Prov.* ii. at the beginning: *My Son, if thou wilt receive my Words, and hide my Commandments with thee, ſo that thou incline thine Ear unto Wiſdom, and apply thine Heart to Underſtanding; yea, if thou cryeſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt*

eſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid Treaſures, then ſhalt thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God——then ſhalt thou underſtand Righteouſneſs and Judgment, and Equity, yea, every good Path. Which Words of *Solomon* are a clear Paraphraſe upon the Text, expreſſing more at large, and in plainer Words, what our Lord here expreſſes more briefly and in Figure, *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

You ſee then who they are that the Bleſſedneſs and Reward of the Text are promiſed to; they are ſuch, and ſuch only, as ſeek after Righteouſneſs, with an intenſe and operative Deſire, with the ſame ardency of Deſire wherewith an hungry Man longs for Food, or a thirſty Man for Drink; which will not ſuffer him to ſit ſtill, waiting and expecting till they are brought to him, without any trouble of his own, but will make him go forth himſelf to ſeek them, and uſe all the Means

which

which are in his Power to procure them.

Then we *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* as we ought to do, when according to the Example of holy *Job*, *Job* xxiii. 12. we eſteem the *Words of God's Mouth more than our neceſſary Food*; when, after the Pattern of our *Saviour*, Joh. iv. 14. we make it our *Meat and Drink to do the Will of God, and to finiſh his Work*; when our Deſire of Righteouſneſs is ſo ardent and intenſe, and our Minds are ſo wholly bent and ſet upon it, to learn and to do our Duty, that in compariſon thereof we neglect, and in a manner forget the neceſſary Means of our preſent Suſtenance, according to that of our *Saviour*, Joh. vi. 27. *Labour not for the Meat which periſheth, but for that Meat which endureth unto everlaſting Life.* In fine, then we *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* as we ought, when our Deſires and Endeavours are ſo fix'd upon this Object, and we are ſo fully reſolv'd in our Minds to diſcharge our Duty in every Point, to the beſt of our Skill and Power, that we can willingly ſuffer hunger and thirſt,

Thirſt, Cold and Nakedneſs and the want of any thing which is moſt neceſſary for the Support and Comfort of this Life, rather than knowingly tranſgreſs any point of Duty, or fall ſhort in one tittle of the moſt perfect Righteouſneſs which in this weak and ſinful State we are able by our utmoſt Endeavours (thro' the Grace of God aſſiſting us) to attain. This is to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs.*

I proceed now in the ſecond place,

II. To ſhew wherein conſiſts both the preſent Bleſſedneſs and the future Reward of ſuch Perſons. *bleſſed are they*, ſays our *Saviour, which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.*

1. I ſhall ſhew wherein conſiſts the preſent Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Perſons; *bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs.*

And the preſent Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Perſons conſiſts mainly in this; That as a good Stomach and a keen Appetite to our bodily Meats is a good Sign of the Health of the Body, ſo this hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, which may be call'd

call'd the Food of our Souls, (as our *Saviour* himſelf expreſſly calls his Doctrine very frequently in *John* vi. I ſay, our hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs) is a good Sign of our ſpiritual Health; 'tis an Argument that we are in a growing and thriving Condition. Whereas on the contrary as the want of Stomach to our Meat is a Sign of Sickneſs, a Symptom of ſome great Indiſpoſition in the Body, which continuing long upon us will be the cauſe of its Decay and Diſſolution, becauſe it can't ſubſiſt without daily Recruits of Suſtenance; ſo the want of this ſpiritual Appetite, the not feeling and perceiving in our ſelves an Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs, is a moſt ſure Sign of the ſick and dangerous Condition of the Soul; and if this want of Appetite continues, it will moſt certainly end in the Deſtruction of it. For the Soul can no more be happy without Righteouſneſs than the Body can be ſtrong and healthy without Meat and Drink; this ſpiritual Food is as neceſſary for our Soul, as Bread is for the Body. And ſo our *Saviour* teaches

teaches us in *John* vi. 53. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* Where, by his Fleſh and his Blood he does not mean his ſacramental Body and Blood which we partake of at the Lord's Supper (for he did not inſtitute his holy Supper till the Night before his Paſſion, *i. e.* not till a long time after he ſpake theſe Words:) but he means his divine and heavenly Doctrine, which he calls Meat, in alluſion to that *Manna* wherewith the *Iſraelites* were fed in the Wilderneſs, the mention whereof had given occaſion to this Diſcourſe of his concerning his own Doctrine, and to his calling it the true Bread that comes down from Heaven: and this Doctrine unleſs we receive and embrace he tells us we have no Life in us, this heavenly Food is ſo neceſſary to us that we can't live without it, our Souls muſt needs periſh if they be not nouriſhed thereby.

This hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs being therefore ſuch a good Sign of ſpiritual Health, is conſequently a means of Bleſſedneſs, as being a juſt Ground of inward

inward Conſolation and ſpiritual Joy; he is for this Reaſon bleſſed, even at preſent, who hungers and thirſts after Righteouſneſs, altho' (as has been intimated before) our complete Bleſſedneſs does not conſiſt merely in the hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs, but rather in the attainment thereof.

'Tis in this ſpiritual Hungring and Thirſting, as it is in the natural; to be hungry is a Sign of Health, and for that reaſon we are well pleas'd with our ſelves, when we have a good Appetite to our Meat; altho' in the Hunger it ſelf there be ſomething of Pain, altho' we can't be fully at eaſe till our Appetite is ſatisfied and our Hunger over: ſo I ſay it is in this ſpiritual hungring after Righteouſneſs (which is the Food and Suſtenance of our Souls, which nouriſhes them unto everlaſting Life) the hungring and thirſting after it, as it is a Sign of our ſpiritual Health is a juſt Ground of Joy and Comfort to us; but nevertheleſs we can't but be in ſome Pain till this Appetite is allay'd, till we have obtain'd in competent mea-

ſure that which we long for; and we can't be completely happy, until our Deſire of it is wholly taken off by Fruition, till our Appetite is fully ſatisfied by the Enjoyment and Poſſeſſion thereof.

And therefore this is in the Text propos'd as the Reward of thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, and is urg'd as a Motive and Encouragement thereto, that they ſhall obtain what they ſo earneſtly deſire, and ſhall be fully ſatisfied in the Poſſeſſion thereof. *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.* And this was the next thing to be ſpoken to, *viz.*

2. To ſhew what is the future Reward of thoſe bleſſed Perſons *which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs. They ſhall be filled.*

Which Promiſe implies theſe two things, 1. That they ſhall certainly obtain that which they ſo earneſtly-deſire; and 2. That they ſhall be fully and completely happy in the Enjoyment thereof.

And in this, they who make Righteouſneſs the Object of their Deſire and Endeavour

deavour are infinitely more happy than they who fix their Deſire upon, or place their Happineſs in any thing elſe; *viz.* that they are ſure not to be diſappointed; whereas they who deſire and ſeek after any worldly Good, and think to be made happy thereby, will be certainly diſappointed in their Expectations: for either they will not by all their Care and Labour be able to obtain what they ſo earneſtly ſeek after; or if they do obtain it, they will not find that full and entire Satisfaction in the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of it which they expected and promis'd to themſelves when they were ſo eager in its Purſuit.

(1.) Then, I ſay, that *they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, (whether thereby we underſtand the Practice of Righteouſneſs, or the Reward of it, or both) *ſhall be filled*; *i. e.* they ſhall moſt certainly obtain what they deſire and ſeek for. For,

1. Taking Righteouſneſs in the firſt Senſe, there is nothing requiſite for the obtaining it, but only our own Endeavour, and God's Bleſſing thereupon.

But now, as to our own Endeavour, that is implied in the Condition it ſelf; for we can't with any propriety of Speech be ſaid to *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* (which imports the moſt earneſt Deſire of it;) unleſs we ſet our ſelves with all Diligence to learn our Duty and to practiſe it. If our Deſire of Righteouſneſs be ſuch as our Deſire of Meat is when we are hungry (and unleſs it be ſuch we can't be ſaid to hunger and thirſt after it) it will not ſuffer us to be lazy and idle, and indifferent whether we have it or no; but we ſhall be impatient in our Deſires, and inceſſant in our Endeavours, to obtain it: our earneſt Deſire of it will inſpire us with ſuch Strength and Courage, and incite us to ſuch Induſtry, that we ſhall readily ſet upon, and eaſily maſter whatever Difficulties are in our way. *Hunger* (we uſe to ſay) *will break through Stone-Walls*; and ſo will the hungring after Righteouſneſs; it will ſo quicken our Endeavours that no Temptation will diſcourage them, no other Employment will divert them: we ſhall make Religion the main

main Buſineſs and Deſign of our Life, and that to which all other Cares ſhall be not only ſubordinate but ſubſervient. This will be the Mark we ſhall aim at, and the End to which all our Endeavours will bend, to approve our ſelves to God's Acceptance, by a careful diſcharge of all our Duties to the utmoſt of our Power. Thus, if we do truly *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, there can be no want in our own Endeavours to obtain it.

And if there be not, there is no Cauſe to fear the want of God's Grace and Bleſſing to make our Endeavours ſucceſsful: for he has faithfully promiſed the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit to all thoſe who ask it, and are ready to co-operate with it; *Luk.* xi. 9, 13. *Ask, and ye ſhall receive; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.—For if ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* And, *Work out your own Salvation*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with Fear and Trembling; for it is God that work-*

eth in you both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *i. e.* If you are as diligent as you ought to be, there will be no want of Help and Aſſiſtance on God's part, to ſucceed your Endeavours. And in 1 *Cor.* x. 13. the ſame *Apoſtle* aſſures us, that *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer* us *to be tempted above what* we *are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that* we *may be able to bear it.*

Thus you ſee, in brief, the Aſſurance which they have, who do *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, of being *filled.* If we are not as good as God requires us to be, it muſt be thro' ſome Defect in our own Endeavours, occaſion'd by the Coldneſs and Indifference of our Deſires. If we are not filled, the Reaſon is, becauſe we do not hunger and thirſt.

Nevertheleſs, as in the natural hunger and thirſt of the Body, we can never ſo ſatisfy them with one Meal, but that they will be the next Day, or ſoon after, craving more; ſo it is likewiſe in this ſpiritual *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs,*

neſs, we ſhall never, while in this World, be ſo filled therewith as not to deſire more and greater Degrees of it than we ſhall have attained. For after we ſhall have ſubdued one Enemy, we ſhall have another to encounter; and after we ſhall have mortified one Luſt, we ſhall find another to mortify; and after we ſhall have forſaken one Sin, we ſhall ſee more Sins to be repented of; and after we ſhall have gained one Grace or Virtue, there will be ſtill more, or at leaſt farther and higher Degrees of the ſame Virtues, to which we ought to aſpire. So that our *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* can never be completely ſatisfy'd in this World; becauſe we ſhall never in this weak and mortal State be able to attain ſuch Perfection in Holineſs and all Virtue, as we ought to aim at and endeavour after. But there is, as St. *Peter* ſays, (2 Epiſt. iii. 13.) *a new Heaven and a new Earth* to be revealed, *wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs:* and when we come thither, (which we ſhall certainly do, if now while we live in this World we are diligent to attain ſuch Perfection

in Holineſs as we are now capable of;) then all our Deſires will be fully ſatisfyed, and we ſhall ceaſe to hunger and thirſt any more. For when we ſhall be arrived to that bleſſed Place, we ſhall be out of the reach of all the Devil's Temptations; for from that Place he is by an everlaſting Decree excluded: and being cloath'd upon with a pure and ſpiritual Body, we ſhall no more have a *Law in our Members, warring againſt the Law in our Minds.* There *the Spirits of juſt Men* will *be made perfect*, being *renewed after the Image of him that created them:* all the Inhabitants of that holy Place will be holy as the Angels of God, and be endued with as much Righteouſneſs as Creatures are capable of; ſo that they will then neither want nor deſire more; according to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. xvii. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs, and when I awake with thy Likeneſs, I ſhall be ſatisfyed with it.* But,

2. As they who *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* are thus ſure to obtain that

that Righteouſneſs which they deſire, (here, in good meaſure, and hereafter to the full;) ſo, taking Righteouſneſs for the Reward of Righteouſneſs, for our Juſtification and Acquittal by God, they are no leſs ſure to obtain that: for indeed theſe are inſeperable; it being the eternal and immutable Decree of God to give *Glory and Honour, and Immortality, and eternal Life*, to all thoſe *who by patient Continuance in well-doing do look for it*. And *whom he juſtifyed* (ſays the *Apoſtle*) *them he alſo glorifyed*.

In the Acquiſition therefore of what we hunger and thirſt after, we cannot be diſappointed. If we do truly *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* we ſhall be certainly filled; we ſhall without all doubt obtain what we deſire and ſeek for, both Righteouſneſs and the Reward of it, both Sanctification and Juſtification, both perfect Holineſs and complete Happineſs. Thus, *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled, i. e.* they ſhall obtain what they deſire. And,

(2.) (Which

(2.) (Which I told you was another thing imply'd in this Promiſe, *they ſhall be filled, i. e.)* They ſhall find and feel themſelves happy in the Enjoyment thereof; they ſhall be ſo fully ſatisfy'd therewith, as not to deſire or ſeek for any thing more. And this indeed is true Happineſs, to be well pleaſed and ſatisfyed with our State; and, on the other ſide, whatever a Man has, yet ſo long as there is ſtill ſomething which he wants, ſomething which he is ſtill deſirous to have, ſo long he's an unhappy Man.

This therefore is the Happineſs, and it is the peculiar Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, above thoſe who make any worldly good the Object of their Deſire, or place Felicity therein; that *they ſhall be filled*, which no others are or can be. For no worldly good can ſatisfy the Mind of Man; he who covets Riches can never be ſatisfyed therewith, and he who is ambitious of Honour can never be ſo great and honourable as he deſires to be, and he who places Happineſs in ſenſual Pleaſures and Delights

Delights will never find ſuch Happineſs therein as he expected; and whatever elſe it is which Men fix their Deſires upon, and ſeek to procure for themſelves, if they be not diſappointed in the Purchaſe, and do not after all their Labour miſs of obtaining the thing which they ſeek for, (which they oftentimes do) they will however at leaſt be diſappointed in the Fruition, and miſs of that complete Happineſs which they expected to have in the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of it. But *they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, and that Reward which God has promiſed thereto, are not only certain to obtain what they hunger and thirſt after, as has been ſhewed already; but they are likewiſe certain to meet with that full Satisfaction in the poſſeſſion thereof which they expected; they will neither be diſappointed in the Succeſs of their Labours, nor in the Fruits of them.

For even in this World their ſincere Endeavour after Righteouſneſs, and the Progreſs and Proficiency which they daily make in it, will be conſtantly accompany'd

ny'd with Peace and Satisfaction of Mind, filling them with a ſpiritual Joy, far exceeding the Pleaſure which any thing elſe in this World can afford: and in the next World, when all their Sins ſhall be pardoned and done away, and they ſhall be made perfect in Righteouſneſs, and admitted into the glorious Preſence of God; ſo far will their Happineſs then be from falling ſhort of their preſent Expectation, that it will far exceed not only what *Eye hath ſeen, or Ear hath heard*, but alſo what can now *enter into the Heart of Man to conceive.* For as they will then reſemble God in Holineſs, ſo will they likewiſe in Happineſs; being *Partakers in the Joy of their Lord*, and Sharers with him in the Glories of his everlaſting Kingdom. *Then ſhall they hunger no more, neither ſhall they thirſt any more.—For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall feed them, and lead them unto living Fountains of Waters*, as 'tis ſaid, *Rev.* vii. 16, 17. Then God himſelf will be their Portion and their Inheritance; and being poſſeſs'd of the ſupreme

Good, there can't poſſibly be any thing more left for them to deſire. For *in his Preſence* (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays) *there is Fullneſs of Joy, and at his right Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.*

Thus, *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled:* they ſhall be ſure to obtain what they purſue, and to be fully ſatifyed in the Acquiſition.

Which Bleſſedneſs, that we may all obtain, God of his great Mercy grant, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus *Chriſt; to whom,* &c.

THE

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MERCIFUL.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Merciful.

MATTH. v. 7.

Bleſſed are the Merciful: for they ſhall obtain Mercy.

THIS is the fifth of the eight Beatitudes. In diſcourſing on which, I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method which I have done in ſpeaking of thoſe which went before: That is,

I. I ſhall ſhew who are the Perſons here by our *Saviour* pronounced bleſſed; *the merciful.* And,

II. I ſhall ſhew wherein conſiſts the Bleſſedneſs, and what will be the Reward of ſuch Perſons. *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.*

I. I ſhall ſhew who are the Perſons to whom this Bleſſedneſs and Reward does belong; and they are *the merciful*; that is, in general, ſuch as are readily diſpoſed in their Minds to ſhew Mercy to all who are proper Objects of Mercy, and who do actually expreſs the ſame as Opportunity offers.

For the farther explaining whereof, it will be needful to ſhew, 1. Who are proper Objects of Mercy: 2. What Affection of Mind towards ſuch Perſons is meant by Mercifulneſs: And, 3. By what Fruits and Effects this Affection of Mind towards them will ſhew forth and expreſs it ſelf; or what are the proper Acts and Exerciſes of Mercy.

1. Who are proper Objects of Mercy: and, in general, they are all thoſe who are in Miſery, or are in Danger of being ſo. In this therefore Mercy differs from Charity, or brotherly Love; in that it is not of ſuch large Extent, that it has not quite ſo many Objects as Charity has. For all Men, of what State and Condition ſoever they be, are Objects of our Charity

or

or Love; for we are to be kindly affected, and to bear a true Love and good Will to all Men; to the proſperous as well as to the afflicted; but they are ſuch only as are in Miſery or Affliction, or who are conſider'd as ſuch, who are the proper Objects of Mercy. We may and ought to love, and be kindly affected to, all Men; but we can't pity or commiſerate thoſe who are in Proſperity, and have nothing to vex them. Our Love conſiſts in not envying their Proſperity, and in wiſhing the Continuance and Encreaſe of it; but the proper Expreſſion of Love, to ſuch as are in Miſery, is to pity their ſad Condition, and to wiſh and endeavour their Deliverance from it; and this is *Mercy*.

Not but that, as I intimated before, even ſuch as are at preſent in Proſperity, may alſo be in ſome ſort the Objects of our Pity and Compaſſion; but then it is, while they are conſider'd as in Danger of ſoon falling into ſome Affliction: for thus we read, in *Luke* xix. 41. that our *Saviour wept over Jeruſalem*, tho' at that time a

flouriſhing City, when by the Spirit of Prophecy he foreſaw the heavy Miſery, and the final Deſtruction thereof, which were to come upon them in a ſhort time. *When he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, ſaying,* ——*The Days ſhall come upon thee, that thine Enemies ſhall caſt a Trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide; and ſhall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one Stone upon another.* Having ſeen then who are the proper Objects of Mercy; I proceed,

2. To ſhew what Affection of the Mind towards ſuch Perſons is meant by Mercy: I ſay what Affection of Mind is meant by it; for Mercy, properly ſpeaking, is an Affection of the Mind; 'tis a Concern that the Perſon whom we have a Kindneſs for is not in ſo good a Condition as we could wiſh him; and a ready Diſpoſition to put him into ſuch a Condition: 'tis a fellow-feeling of another's Sufferings, and being in ſuch manner concern'd thereat,

at, as we ſhould be if the ſame had befallen our ſelves.

And that 'tis our Duty to be thus compaſſionately affected towards ſuch as are in Miſery, is evident from ſundry Texts of Scripture which expreſſly enjoyn it; as, *Eph.* iv. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, and tender-hearted:* 1 Pet. iii. 8. *Be ye all of one Mind, having Compaſſion one of another:* and this the Apoſtle St. *Paul* calls *weeping with them that weep*, in *Rom.* xii. 15. and the *ſuffering* of *all the Members* with any *one Member* that ſuffers, 1 *Cor.* xii. 26. And yet if it had not been ſo expreſſly enjoyn'd, our Obligation to it could not have been diſputed, any more than it can be whether we are bound to love one another. For what is Love to another, who is in Miſery or Affliction, but a Compaſſion for him, naturally putting us upon endeavouring to give him all the Eaſe we can; that ſo by his being at Eaſe, we our ſelves may be at Eaſe alſo? Which leads me to the third thing propounded; which was,

3. To ſhew by what Fruits and Effects

ſuch an Affection of Mind towards others will ſhew forth and expreſs it ſelf, or what are the proper Acts and Exerciſes of Mercy.

Now the Rule in general is, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* As therefore when we our ſelves are in danger of coming into any Pain or Trouble, our ſelf-love prompts and obliges us to uſe all poſſible Means to prevent it; ſo will our neighbourly Love incline us to uſe what Means we can, to preſerve him from falling into the like Trouble: and, as when we our ſelves are in Pain or Miſery, our ſelf-love makes us try all ways to give our ſelves Eaſe; ſo will our brotherly Love incline us to comfort our Brother in his Diſtreſs, and to contribute what we can towards his Relief; and that the rather, becauſe having a fellow-feeling of his Sufferings, we can't be fully at Eaſe our ſelves, ſo long as he's ſorely afflicted, or in great Miſery.

The Exerciſe, therefore, of Mercy to ſuch as are proper Objects of Mercy, conſiſts chiefly in theſe two things: 1. In endea-

endeavouring to prevent any Evil or Miſchief which we apprehend our Neighbour in danger of falling into: and 2, If he be already fallen into it, in endeavouring to give him Eaſe under it, and to deliver him from it.

1. In preventing (ſo far as in us lies) his falling into any Evil or Miſchief. And we diſcharge this great Office of Mercy, (1.) By ſtrictly abſtaining from all Acts of Cruelty or Unmercifulneſs towards him our ſelves: and, (2.) By giving him what Aſſiſtance we can to avoid thoſe Evils which he is in danger to fall into by his own Folly, or thro' the Cruelty or Injuſtice of others.

(1.) By ſtrictly abſtaining from all Acts of Cruelty and Unmercifulneſs towards him our ſelves.

And the Acts of Mercifulneſs, which may be reduced to this Head, are ſo various and many, that it would be hard and alſo tedious to reckon them all up. It ſhall be ſufficient therefore to name ſome few; by the mention whereof, the reſt

being of the like nature, may be eaſily apprehended. And,

1. One main Exerciſe of this kind of Mercifulneſs conſiſts in uſing with Tenderneſs and Moderation that Dominion or Authority which we have over others. Particularly,

A merciful Man, if he be a Father, a Maſter, or a Magiſtrate, will not impoſe upon thoſe who are ſubject to him, hard and rigorous Commands; enjoyning ſuch Services as are above their Strength, or wearying them out with hard and continual Labour.

He will not be ſevere with them for every ſmall Tranſgreſſion; nor for a greater Fault will he ever puniſh more than is neceſſary either to procure Amendment in the Party offending, or for Terror to others.

And whenever he does puniſh (thinking himſelf oblig'd in Duty ſo to do) he will do it, however, with ſome ſort of Reluctance; 'twill be a Work which he will have ſome Averſion to. So far will he be from taking Delight in this juſt Exerciſe of

of his Authority; that he will rather be in ſome Pain himſelf, all the while that he is (tho' ſo neceſſarily) putting others to pain. For ſo even God himſelf, when he does *afflict and grieve the Children of Men*, which to be ſure he never does undeſervedly, is ſaid nevertheleſs to do it *unwillingly*.

2. The ſame Principle of Mercy which makes a Man gentle in the uſe of his Authority, will alſo make him eaſy in aſſerting any other Right. A merciful Man knows no other Law but Equity; and will never inſiſt on a legal Right, unleſs the ſame be an equitable Right alſo; nor will he ever make uſe of any Right or Power which the Law gives him, to the great Oppreſſion or utter Undoing of his poor Neighbour.

Thus, for inſtance, he who is a merciful Man, if he be a Landlord, will not gripe and ſqueeze his Tenants, ſo that they ſhall not be able to live under him. If he be a Buyer, he will not take Advantage of the urgent Neceſſity of the Seller, who for want of preſent Money muſt

muſt take for his Goods any thing which is offer'd, tho' not near their Worth: And if he be a Seller, he will not make Advantage of the preſent Neceſſity which the Buyer has of his Goods, and for that Reaſon exact more for them than the Market Price. He will be willing that other Men ſhould live and thrive in the World as well as himſelf; and ſo will be reaſonable in all his Bargains, and fair and equal in all his Dealings.

For which Reaſon alſo, if he has already ſtruck a Bargain, which when it was made was thought fair and juſt, but afterwards proves very hard on the other ſide; he will not rigorouſly inſiſt on his Bargain; but will either conſent to the avoiding it; or elſe make a reaſonable Allowance, for that unforeſeen, and for that Reaſon unprovided for, caſualty, which rendred it ſo diſadvantagious to his Neighbour.

The ſame Principle of Mercy will likewiſe make a Man not rigorouſly to exact his juſt Debts, when the Perſon indebted is not able to pay what he owes. A merciful Man will not (like that rigorous Creditor

Creditor in the Goſpel, ſpoken of in *Matth.* xviii. 28) *take* his Neighbour *by the Throat, ſaying, pay me that thou oweſt*; and in default of preſent Payment, caſt him immediately into Priſon: to lie there till he pays. On the contrary, if he ſees that his Debtor is not able to pay, (eſpecially, in caſe he be fallen into decay, not by his own Folly or Prodigality, but by the Providence of God) he will either compound the Debt, and take at once what the other is at preſent able to pay; or elſe give him ſufficient Time to raiſe what he owes by his Induſtry, and be content to receive his Debt by ſuch Payments as the other is able to make; or, at laſt, if he ſees that his Neighbour neither is now, nor is ever likely hereafter to be, able to pay any part of what he owes, he will freely forgive him the whole Debt; and grant him his Liberty, that he may by ſome lawful Employment get Bread for himſelf and his Family; all which muſt periſh for Want, as well as the Man himſelf, ſhould he execute the Law rigorouſly upon him, and confine him

him to a Priſon all the Days of his Life.

3. Laſtly; The ſame Principle of Mercy which makes a Man gentle in the uſe of his Authority, and eaſy in aſſerting his Right, will eſpecially, and above all things, make him ſtrictly to forbear all Exerciſe of Revenge, properly ſo called, *i. e.* the doing evil to another, for the ſake of ſome Injury received from him, without Proſpect of receiving thereby any Reparation of the Hurt which he had before ſuffered. If therefore the Chriſtian Law had allow'd us (as the *Jewiſh* Law did) to require *an Eye for an Eye*, or *a Tooth for a Tooth*, ſo that we might in Juſtice, and without the Breach of any other Law, inflict the ſame Evil on another which he had done to us; yet the Law of Mercy would debar us the uſe of ſuch Liberty. In Caſes which are hard and grievous to our Neighbour, a merciful Man will not do all that a juſt Man might do; he will conſider his Neighbour's Caſe as his own; and deal as gently by him as he himſelf ſhould deſire to be dealt by; and be as ready to forgive the Injuries he has received,

as

as he is desirous to be forgiven the Injuries he has done; and as he hopes to receive Forgiveness at God's Hands for the many Trespasses he has committed against him.

And this is such an essential Branch of Mercifulness, that we rarely in Scripture meet with any Precept or Command of Mercifulness wherein this Instance of it is not expressly mentioned or plainly referred to. Thus in *Col.* iii. 12. *Put on therefore as the Elect of God——Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Meekness, Long-suffering*; and then it immediately follows, ℣. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* Thus also St. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9. after he had been exhorting to Mercy; *be of one Mind, having Compassion one of another*; *love as Brethren*; *be pitiful, be courteous*; adds immediately, as a main Instance of Mercy and Compassion; *not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise Blessing.* And our *Saviour* himself plainly intimates this to be an essential

Property

Property of Mercy, when having in the vi^th^ Chap. of St. *Luke*, been in ſeveral foregoing Verſes, diſſuading from Revenge, he adds at the xxxvi^th^ ℣. theſe Words, both abridging and enforcing all that he had ſaid before. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father which is in Heaven is merciful.* But as a Principle of Mercifulneſs will make us, in order to the preventing our Neighbours coming into any Miſery or Trouble, ſtrictly to forbear all Acts of Cruelty and Unmercifulneſs towards him our ſelves.; ſo,

(2.) In purſuance of the ſame Deſign it will alſo make us readily give him what Aſſiſtance we can, to help him to avoid thoſe Evils which he is in danger of falling into, either by his own Folly and Raſhneſs, or thro' the Cruelty and Injuſtice of others. A merciful Man will be *Eyes to the blind*, and *Feet to the lame*, according to the good Example of *Job*, Chap. xxxix. 15. A merciful Man, whenever he ſees his Neighbour falling into any Danger, will call out to him, and forwarn him of it; and if need be run himſelf to

him

him and hold him back; and if he ſees others laying Snares, or preparing Miſchief for him, will give him ſpeedy notice thereof, warn him to be upon his Guard, and adviſe him the beſt he can how he may avoid the ſame.

But above all, a truly merciful Man will be moſt tender of his Neighbour's ſpiritual Welfare; and therefore when he ſees him running heedleſſly on in a Courſe of Sin, which will bring him to utter Deſtruction both of Body and Soul, he will be moved with much Compaſſion towards him, and uſe his utmoſt Endeavour to reſcue him from this greateſt of all Dangers. He will warn him both in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, of the deſtructive Courſe which he has taken, and the intolerable Puniſhment which it will inevitably bring him to, if not timely forſaken. And if he ſees him regardleſs of friendly Admonitions, he will uſe his Authority (if he has any over him) to reſtrain him; nay and even by main Force (ſo far as lawfully he may) give a check, or put a ſtop to him; *pulling* him as a Firebrand *out of the Fire*,

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as St. *Jude* expreſſes it, *v.* 23. and not ſuffering him to run himſelf into Perdition.

Such is the Exerciſe of the firſt Branch of Mercifulneſs before-mention'd, which conſiſts in the preventing (ſo far as we can) our Neighbour's falling into any Evil or Miſchief.

2. The other Branch of it conſiſts in endeavouring to give him Eaſe under any Evil which has befallen him, and to deliver him from it.

And the Practice or Exerciſe of this Branch of Mercy is very large and comprehenſive; the Duties of Mercy towards ſuch as are in Miſery, being as various as the Miſeries themſelves are, which any of our Neighbours may happen to be in; to each of which Mercy applies ſuitable Remedies, in order to the giving him Eaſe under his Affliction, and to the delivering him from it.

Thus therefore, if our Neighbour be ſick, the Exerciſe of Mercy towards him in this Condition lies in viſiting and comforting him in his Sickneſs, and contributing our beſt Advice and Aſſiſtance toward

wards his Recovery: according to the Example of the good *Samaritan*, ſpoken of in *Luke* x. 34. who ſeeing, as he travelled, a Man lying by the way-ſide which had been wounded by Thieves, *had Compaſſion on him, and went to him, and bound up his Wounds, pouring in Oyl and Wine.*

Thus, if he be in Sorrow for the Death of a Relation, or any other evil Accident which has befallen him, the Duty of Mercy obliges us to condole with him in his Loſs or Misfortune; and to adminiſter to him the beſt Comforts we can to ſupport him under his Affliction. The former of which is what the *Apoſtle* directs, in *Rom.* xii. 15. *Weep with them that weep*; the latter, in *Gal.* vi. 2. *Bear ye one another's Burthens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.*

Thus again; if he be undeſervedly reproach'd and diſgrac'd, the Exerciſe of Mercy towards him, under this Calamity, conſiſts chiefly in endeavouring (by making a true Repreſentation of him) to wipe off the Slanders and Aſperſions which have

been caſt upon him: *ſpeaking the Truth in Love*, Eph. iv. 15.

And thus, laſtly, to mention no more Inſtances of this kind; if he be in Want and Neceſſity, the Exerciſe of Mercy towards him, in thoſe Circumſtances, conſiſts in ſuitably ſupplying his Wants; feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, and freely contributing to the Wants of the Poor, out of our Abundance: nay, and even out of our own Scarceneſs, if their Neceſſities be very preſſing and urgent. Mercy to ſuch as theſe does not conſiſt in expreſſing ſome Concern at their ſad Condition, and beſtowing upon them good Wiſhes only; but in naturally ſupplying their Wants ſo far as we are able: for, as St. *James* ſays, Ch. ii. ℣. 15, 16. *If a Brother or a Siſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily Food, and one of you ſay unto them, depart in Peace; be ye warmed and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the Body; what doth it profit?* The good *Samaritan* before-mention'd, did not thus only expreſs his Pity to his poor Neighbour,

bour, *viz.* by wiſhing him ſound and well at his own home; but after he had bound up his Wounds, *he put him upon his own Beaſt, and brought him to an Inn, and took Care of him:* and when his own Occaſions called him away, that he could not any longer ſtay himſelf to look after him, he committed the Care of him to his Hoſt, giving him immediately in Hand what he could then ſpare, to defray the Charges he ſhould be at upon the poor Man's Account; and promiſing to repay him what farther he ſhould have Occaſion to lay out for his Cure. And this our *Saviour* calls *his having Compaſſion on him*; and thereupon commands his Diſciples to go and do likewiſe.

But if we are obliged, by the Duty of Mercy, thus to contribute our Help towards the delivering our Neighbour from the temporal and bodily Evils which he is fallen into; much more are we oblig'd to give him our utmoſt Aſſiſtance to reſcue him from ſpiritual Evils, which are far greater, and may more juſtly move our Compaſſion.

To thoſe Expreſſions, therefore, of Mercy, which have been already mentioned, theſe may now be added, *viz.* to inſtruct the Ignorant, to counſel the Unwary, to direct the Simple, to reprove an offending Brother, to reduce them who wander out of the way, to reſtore in the Spirit of Meekneſs thoſe who are overtaken in a Fault; and, in a word, to contribute our utmoſt to reclaim and withdraw our Brother from a Courſe of Sin, which if proceeded in, will procure his everlaſting Deſtruction.

And this is ſuch an Inſtance of Mercy as every Man whatſoever is, in ſome meaſure, capable of diſcharging to others. Even they who, by reaſon of their own Poverty, are not in a Condition to ſupply the bodily wants of their poor Neighbours; may be no leſs capable than the wealthieſt to exerciſe this ſpiritual Mercy towards their Souls. And this alſo, as it is the cheapeſt and eaſieſt Expreſſion of Mercy, is likewiſe the moſt beneficial: 'tis as much a greater Kindneſs to deliver our Neighbour from the Evil of Sin, than from any other Evil;

Evil; as the Soul is better than the Body, and the Torments of Hell more grievous than any other Pain, and our well-being to all Eternity to be preferred before the Eaſe and Comfort of a momentary Life. For, as St. *James* ſays, Ch. v. ℣. 20. *He which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins.*

And now from what has been already ſaid, I ſuppoſe it ſufficiently appears, upon what Terms the Bleſſing and Reward of the Text are diſpenſed; or who are the Perſons here by our *Saviour* pronounced bleſſed; *Bleſſed are the merciful:* they are ſuch, you ſee, as are readily diſpoſed in their Minds to ſhew all kinds of Mercy to all who are in any reſpect, or upon any account, proper Objects of Mercy; and who do always actually ſhew and expreſs the ſame, as Opportunity is offered; endeavouring both to prevent any Evil, bodily or ſpiritual, which they foreſee their Neighbour likely to fall into; and alſo to deliver him from

any Evil of either kind which he is already plung'd into, or involv'd in. He who doth this is a merciful Man. And this was the firſt thing propoſed to be done. I proceed now, in the ſecond place,

II. To excite and encourage you to the Study and Practice of this moſt excellent Grace, by ſhewing wherein conſiſts the Bleſſedneſs, and what will be the Reward of ſuch Perſons. *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy.*

1. Wherein conſiſts the Bleſſedneſs of ſuch Perſons; *Bleſſed are the merciful.* They are bleſſed; that is, they are ſo even at preſent: there is a Bleſſedneſs immediately annex'd to the Duty it ſelf, and naturally reſulting from the Practice and Exerciſe thereof. Thus alſo the *Pſalmiſt* obſerves, inſtancing only in one Branch of this large and comprehenſive Duty, *viz.* Bounty to the poor: *Pſalm* xli. 1. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor and needy:* and the ſame is confirmed by his Son *Solomon*, Prov. xiv. 21. *He that hath Pity on the poor, happy is he.*

The

The World generally thinks thoſe happy, who being in any Trouble or Affliction meet with Friends, ready and able to comfort and relieve them. Thus, 'twas happy for the Man who had been robb'd and wounded by Thieves, that when ſeveral others had careleſſly paſs'd by him, the good *Samaritan* came at length, and had Compaſſion on him: and 'tis well for thoſe, who when they are hungry or thirſty, or naked, are ſo happy as to light upon ſome charitably diſpos'd Perſons, who freely ſupply them with ſuch things as they have need of. And this is moſt certainly true; 'tis a Happineſs for a Man to find Friends when he wants them, and to receive of the Charity of others ſuch things as he has need of: but 'tis a much greater Happineſs to be a Friend to thoſe who are in Adverſity, and to give to thoſe who need. And ſo we are expreſſly taught by our *Saviour* himſelf, in that Sentence of his, which tho' not recorded by any of the four *Evangeliſts*, is cited by St. *Paul* as a Sentence which was often in his Mouth; *Acts* xx. 35. *Remember*, ſays he, *the*

Words of our Lord Jeſus; how he ſaid it is more bleſſed to give than to receive. And there is indeed a great deal more inward Pleaſure and Satisfaction of Mind in doing Good to others, than in receiving Good from others: for the Pleaſure ariſing from the Good we receive, is, as the thing it ſelf is which we receive, of ſhort continuance, 'tis over almoſt as ſoon as taſted; but the Pleaſure of doing Good is a real, ſubſtantial and durable Pleaſure; yielding great Delights not only while we are doing it, but alſo whenever afterwards we remember it, and reflect upon it. And beſides, while we receive Good, tho' we are delighted with the preſent Refreſhment which it gives us; yet this Delight is accompanied with another Conſideration which is not ſo pleaſant, *viz.* of our own Want and Imperfection. When we receive a Benefit, tho' we are glad of the Relief or Succour which it gives us, yet we can hardly receive it without bluſhing; being ſomewhat aſhamed that we ſhould ſtand in ſuch need of another's Kindneſs, and be bound to be ſo much beholden to him: but

but the Pleaſure of doing Kindneſſes, and of laying Obligations upon others, is pure and unmix'd; 'tis all Pleaſure, without any alloy, on our part, of any thing which is unpleaſant. So that doing good, as we imitate therein God himſelf, ſo we partake thereby in ſome Degree of his Happineſs, who takes great Delight in communicating his Goodneſs, and in ſhewing Mercy to all who need it.

Such is the preſent Bleſſedneſs conferr'd by this moſt excellent Grace, ſufficient alone to engage us to the conſtant Exerciſe thereof, tho' it had no other Reward. And yet,

2. There is alſo a very great Reward promis'd to it, ſuch as would be a ſufficient Motive to its Practice, altho' it were not attended with any ſuch preſent Delights. The merciful Man is therefore bleſſed both ways; *viz.* in the Practice of his Duty, and in the Fruit of it. *Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.*

They ſhall obtain Mercy, ſays our Lord; but he does not ſay from whom they ſhall obtain it; whether from Men, or

or from God. And there was good Reaſon for this; becauſe the expreſs mention of either might have been thought an Excluſion of the other; whereas it was doubtleſs our *Saviour*'s Intention to include both, and to declare that ſuch ſhall receive Mercy both from God and Men. For the truth is, that a merciful Man lays an Obligation upon all Mankind; by their near Relation to one another, and the Concern they have, or ſhould have, for each other's Welfare, they all become his Debtors for the Good which he has done to ſome of them, even to as many of them as he could. And not only ſo, but God alſo himſelf is made his Debtor, by virtue of his own gracious Promiſe; whence the *wiſe Man* ſays, Prov. xix. 17. that *he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord*; and our *Saviour*, ſpeaking in general of all Works of Mercy, ſays, *Matth.* xxv. 40. *Inaſmuch as ye have done* them *unto the leaſt of my Brethren, ye have done* them *unto me.*

(1.) Then, I ſay, a merciful Man ſhall obtain Mercy from Men. *Give, and it ſhall*

ſhall be given unto you, ſays our *Saviour*, *good Meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall Men give into your Boſom*, Luke vi. 38. This is true, for the moſt part; it very rarely happens that a merciful Man, who is a Friend to all, ever wants Friends when he himſelf comes to need them: for there is nothing in the World which more recommends a Man to the Pity and Compaſſion of others, than this; and therefore the *wiſe Man* uſes this as a ſtrong Motive to Works of Goodneſs and Mercy, in *Eccl.* xi. 2. *Give a Portion to ſeven, and alſo to eight; for thou knoweſt not what Evil ſhall be upon the Earth:* as if he had ſaid; be careful, whilſt thou art in Proſperity, to lay an Obligation upon as many as thou canſt by Works of Mercy and Bounty; for thou knoweſt not how the World may change; thou knoweſt not but that thou thy ſelf may'ſt in a ſhort time come to ſtand in need of other Mens Bounty and Compaſſion, as much as any do now of thine; and thou may'ſt reaſonably expect, that they will then deal by thee, as thou dealeſt

dealeſt now by others. As therefore, if thou art now cruel and hard-hearted, thou wilt then have no reaſon to expect Pity; ſo, on the other ſide, if thou art now kind and merciful, thy former Kindneſs to others will then be remember'd; and tho' they whom thou haſt been kind to may not be able, yet if there be any Juſtice or Gratitude left in the World, ſome or other of thoſe who will be able, will be ready to repay to thee that Debt of Kindneſs which they all owe thee.

Nevertheleſs, after all it muſt be confeſſed that this is only an high Probability, not an abſolute Certainty. The Promiſe therefore taken in this Senſe is not without ſome Exceptions. Works of Mercy are indeed a Debt lent to Mankind, upon as good Security as any is in the World; but the beſt worldly Security may fail us: and therefore, tho' a merciful Man may reaſonably hope and truſt that he ſhall receive Mercy from Men; yet he can't be ſure of it. But then,

(2.) This he may more certainly depend upon, that he ſhall obtain Mercy from

from God; and conſequently that the leſs of it he receives from Men, the more of it he ſhall receive from God. For *God*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *Heb.* vi. 10. *is not unrighteous, that he ſhould forget your Work, and Labour of Love, in that ye have miniſter'd to the Saints, and yet do miniſter.* This therefore was doubtleſs what our *Saviour* chiefly meant by this Promiſe, *viz.* that the *Merciful ſhall obtain Mercy from God*; and that indeed they ſhall do, both in this World, and in the next.

1. In this World. So we are aſſured in *Pſalm* xli. 1. &c. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor and Needy, the Lord will deliver him in the Time of Trouble. The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive; and he ſhall he bleſſed upon the Earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the Will of his Enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the Bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickneſs.*

Nay ſo much is God pleaſed, ſo highly is he delighted with theſe *Sacrifices* of Mercy (as they are in Scripture ſometimes

times called) that they render him favourable and propitious to whole Families; ſo that a merciful Man entails a Bleſſing even upon his Children and Poſterity after him. So we are told, *Pſalm* xxxvii. 25. *I have been young and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the Righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging Bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his Seed is bleſſed.* But,

2. The greateſt Expreſſions of God's Mercy to merciful Men will be in the other World; and the leſs of it they receive here, the larger Stock will they have of it to come hereafter. For that is the proper Seaſon of Recompence and Retribution, when God ſhall come in Judgment to render to every Man according to his Works.

And then, as St. *James* ſays, *Jam.* ii. 13. *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy that hath ſhewed no Mercy.* But all the Fountains of the divine Mercy will be opened for the Merciful; and all the Treaſures of the divine Goodneſs will then be ſcattered abroad among thoſe who in this World had been good and compaſſionate to others

thers. As they did not deal rigorouſly with their Brethren here, ſo God will not then deal rigorouſly with them; their *Charity* will *cover a multitude of Sins:* and as they were ready to forgive the Treſpaſſes againſt them; ſo will God then forgive their manifold Treſpaſſes againſt him. *Forgive and it ſhall be forgiven unto you*, ſays our *Saviour*, *Luke* vi. 37. *And if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you*, *Matth.* vi. 14. And laſtly, as they were free in communicating to ſuch as needed of thoſe good things wherewith God had bleſſed them here; ſo God alſo will be very liberal in beſtowing upon them the Riches and Glories of his heavenly Kingdom. Thus ſays our Lord himſelf, *Luke* vi. 35. *Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your Reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the Children of the Higheſt.* And again, *Luke* xiv. 13, 14. *When thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe thee. For thou ſhalt be recompens'd at the Reſurrection*

ſurrection of the Juſt. Thus, *bleſſed are the Merciful for they ſhall obtain Mercy.* They ſhall obtain it both from Men, and from God; and both in this World and in the next.

Nevertheleſs to prevent any Miſunderſtanding of what has been laſt ſaid; I think it may be needful to note (tho' the ſame has been formerly noted) that the Promiſe made here to the Merciful, is for Subſtance the ſame with thoſe made in the foregoing Verſes, to the *poor in Spirit*, to the *Mourners*, to the *Meek*, and to them who *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*; and in the following Verſes, to the *pure in Heart*, to the *Peace-makers*, and to the *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*; (all theſe Promiſes, I ſay, *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; *they ſhall be comforted*; *they ſhall inherit the Earth*; *they ſhall be filled*; *they ſhall obtain Mercy*; *they ſhall ſee God*; *they ſhall be called the Children of God*; *and their Reward ſhall he great in Heaven*; are for Subſtance the ſame) Heaven, and the Happineſs of Heaven is moſt plainly the thing

thing meant in all of them; tho' it be expreſs'd in different Phraſes. Which being ſo, it from hence plainly follows; that it is not any one of theſe Graces by it ſelf, but all of them together, that do entitle us to the Promiſe. And this I the rather mention now, becauſe the Promiſe being made in Holy Scripture more frequently to this, than to any other one ſingle Grace or Virtue, there have been ſome ſo vain as to hope to recommend themſelves to God's Favour, only by Works of Mercy and Charity, tho' they have been ſcandalouſly deficient in every other Duty; nay ſome have gone farther ſtill, and by ſome charitable Legacies given away by their laſt Will, upon their Death-bed have hoped, as it were, to attone for all the foul Miſcarriages of a paſt wicked Life. But that ſuch Hope is vain and groundleſs, we are clearly taught by St. *James*, Chap. ii. ℣. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* That is, he will be as ſurely (tho' perhaps not ſo ſeverely) condemn'd,

for his known, allow'd, unrepented-of Breach of that one Law, as if he had made no Conſcience of keeping any. If any Man therefore be a Whoremonger, or a Drunkard, or a prophane Swearer, or proud, or covetous, or lives in any other known Sin; let not ſuch an one think that his only being merciful and compaſſionate (which may be the Happineſs of his Conſtitution more than the Choice of his Will) will attone for all or any of thoſe wicked Practices which he allows himſelf in, or excuſe him from the Condemnation that is expreſſly threatned to all that do ſuch things.

All therefore that is meant by this Promiſe of Mercy to the Merciful is this; that ſuch ſhall be ſure to obtain Mercy in the Forgiveneſs of all their Sins upon their Repentance: And perhaps this farther, that if for their other Sins, unrepented of, they ſhould be condemn'd, it may be a leſs Degree of Torment: Thus much their Mercifulneſs alone may avail them. Whereas, on the other ſide, if a Man be

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed endued with all other Graces and Virtues except this only, he will be as ſurely condemn'd for the want of this, as if he had wanted them all: *For he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath ſhewed no Mercy*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, and the beſt and moſt perfect Man upon Earth could not be juſtified, ſhould God enter into ſuch Judgment with him.

In ſhort therefore, and to conclude; tho' Mercy be not the only Duty required of us, it is nevertheleſs a Duty of very great Importance, and upon it our everlaſting Happineſs does in great meaſure depend; becauſe according as we have been merciful or unmerciful to our Brethren here, ſo God at the great Day of Judgment will be either favourable or ſevere to us. *With the Merciful God will ſhew himſelf merciful, and with the Froward he will ſhew himſelf froward.* As the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſalm* xviii. 25. and *with what Meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again*, ſays our *Saviour*, *Matth.* vii. 2.

To which alſo agrees that Account which he himſelf gives us of the Proceedings at the great Day of Judgment in the xxv^th^ Chap. of St. *Matthew*. Where (as if the only thing that would then be enquired into, were, whether Men had been merciful or unmerciful) they who had exerciſed Mercy here, in feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, and viſiting the Sick, and entertaining the Stranger, are declared to be the *Bleſſed of God*, and admitted to *inherit the Kingdom*; and they, on the other ſide, who had not ſhewed Mercy to ſuch proper Objects of Mercy (whatever other good Qualifications they might have had, or whatever other good things they might have done) are declared accurſed, and ſentenced to *go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*.

Thus I have ſhewn, who are the Perſons here ſpoken of by our *Saviour*; and likewiſe, wherein conſiſts their Bleſſedneſs, and what will be their Reward. *Bleſſed are the Merciful for they ſhall obtain Mercy*.

Which

Which Bleſſedneſs and Reward that we may all of us obtain, by the conſtant Exerciſe of this Grace, God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever.* Amen.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE PURE in HEART.

DISCOURSE IX.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Pure in Heart.

MATTH. v. 8.

Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.

THIS Beatitude being delivered by our *Saviour* in the ſame Form with the reſt, will, I ſuppoſe, be beſt treated of by proceeding in the ſame Method of Diſcourſe which has been hitherto obſerv'd, *viz.*

I. By enquiring who are the Perſons here ſpoken of; or what it is to be *pure in Heart*. And,

II. By ſhewing wherein conſiſts the Bleſſedneſs, and what is the Reward of ſuch

ſuch Perſons. *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

I. Then, I ſhall enquire who are the Perſons here ſpoken of, and pronounced bleſſed; *the Pure in Heart*; or what it is to be *pure in Heart*.

Now by Heart here, it is moſt obvious to underſtand the Soul, with all its Faculties, the Underſtanding, the Will, and the Affections; the Heart is the inward Man, as diſtinguiſh'd from the outward Man, or the Body: and the moſt proper meaning of Purity, is Cleanneſs, or Freedom from Filth or Pollution; and there is nothing that, in a moral Senſe, can be reckon'd Filth or Pollution, but only Sin. As therefore, in this moral Senſe of Purity, he only is pure in Body, who abſtains from the outward Acts of Sin; ſo he only is *pure in Heart*, or Soul, whoſe Mind is clear from the Pollution of evil Thoughts.

The *Pure in Heart* then, in ſhort, are they, who, aiming principally to recommend themſelves to God's Acceptance, who ſearches the Heart, do as ſtrictly forbear all inward Acts of Sin, and are as careful

careful to avoid evil Thoughts, as they would be to forbear and avoid the open Practice of Wickedneſs, in caſe their Deſign were only to recommend themſelves to the Eyes of Men.

For the farther Explanation therefore of the Nature of this Grace or Virtue, Purity of Heart, it may be needful to enquire,

1. What Thoughts are evil; or what evil Thoughts do pollute and defile the Soul. And,

2. What Carefulneſs to avoid ſuch evil Thoughts is requiſite in order to the preſerving that Purity of Heart which is here preſcribed and commended as the Condition of, or a neceſſary Qualification for, our ſeeing God.

1. What Thoughts are evil; or what evil Thoughts do pollute and defile the Soul. And theſe may be reduc'd to two ſorts or kinds; (1.) Such as are evil in their own Nature, and, (2.) Such as are evil by reaſon of their Relation to, and Tendency to produce, evil Actions.

(1.) Such

(1.) Such as are evil in their own Nature: and theſe may be reduc'd to the ſame three Heads which evil Actions are commonly reduc'd to, with regard to the three ſeveral Objects or Subjects which they are exerciſed about, *viz.* God, our Neighbour, and our ſelves: and they are therefore evil, becauſe they are contrary either to Piety, or to Juſtice or Charity, or to Sobriety.

1. One Head of Thoughts evil in themſelves, are ſuch as, having God or Religion for their Object, are contrary to Piety, and Breaches of that Duty which we owe immediately to God himſelf. And ſuch are all atheiſtical Thoughts; the ſaying in our Hearts there is no God, or no Providence, or that all Religion is vain. Such likewiſe are all blaſphemous and diſhonourable Thoughts of God; the thinking him not ſo wiſe, ſo holy, ſo good, ſo juſt, as indeed he is; the believing him to be in any reſpect liable to the ſame Paſſions or Weakneſſes that Men are; and, in fine, the attributing to him in our Mind and Judgment any thing that is unworthy of

of him. Such Thoughts as theſe are evil in themſelves, becauſe they are exceedingly falſe; they are Errors in Fundamentals; they are ſuch Miſtakes as do in Effect deſtroy all Religion.

2. Another Head of Thoughts evil in themſelves, are ſuch as, having our Neighbour for their Object, are contrary to Juſtice or Charity; and ſo are Breaches of that Duty which we owe to our Neighbour. And ſuch are, the judging hardly and uncharitably of others; the interpreting their Words or Actions in a bad Senſe, when they are fairly capable of a good one; as alſo, envious and malicious Thoughts; the grudging our Neighbour the Good he enjoys, the repining at his Happineſs, the wiſhing it were worſe with him than it is. All ſuch Thoughts are evil in themſelves, tho' they proceed no farther than thought; tho' they never work any real Evil to our Neighbour; becauſe they are in themſelves plainly contrary to, and inconſiſtent with, that hearty Love and Good Will which we are taught both by natural Reaſon, and by the

the expreſs Command of God, to bear to all Men. For *Charity*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *thinketh no Evil.*

3. The third Head of Thoughts evil in themſelves, are ſuch as, having our ſelves for their Object, are contrary to Sobriety, and ſo are Breaches of that Duty which we may in ſome ſort be ſaid to owe to our ſelves. And ſuch are all proud, arrogant, and aſpiring Thoughts, whereby we are lifted up in our own Minds, and become vain in our Imaginations; when contrary to that Precept of the *Apoſtle*, Rom. xii. 3. *We think of our ſelves more highly than we ought to think; and not ſoberly, according to the Meaſure that God hath dealt unto us*; when we are *wiſe in our own Conceits*, and have a far greater Eſteem and Value for our ſelves than we have for any others; as if none elſe were ſo good as we; or as if thoſe things wherein it may be we do indeed excel them were owing to our ſelves only, and not to the good Providence and Diſpoſition of Almighty God, who was pleaſed to make this Difference between us.

And

And, I ſay, that ſuch Thoughts as theſe are evil in themſelves, altho' they ſhould produce no hurtful Effect in our outward Behaviour and Converſation, as being contrary to Humility and Sobriety, and to that meek and lowly temper of Mind which the Goſpel requires, which commands that *each* ſhould *eſteem other better than themſelves*, and *in Honour prefer one another*; and are therefore expreſſly forbidden in Scripture, under the Phraſes of *an high Look*, *a proud Heart*, *worldly Wiſdom*, and the like.

(2.) The other ſort of evil Thoughts are ſuch as are evil by reaſon of their relation to ſinful Actions, or their tendency to produce them.

Nevertheleſs, I do not mean that all thoſe evil Thoughts which I may have occaſion to inſtance in under this Head, are evil only upon this account; for ſome of them perhaps are ſuch as are alſo evil in themſelves, and ſo might have been mention'd under the former Head, as being expreſſly prohibited by ſome Law of the Goſpel: but my meaning is to ſhew, that there

there are ſome Thoughts which, tho' it ſhould be ſuppoſed that they are innocent in themſelves, do yet contract a Guiltineſs by the relation which they have to, or their tendency to produce ſinful Actions; or which, if they were evil otherwiſe, or before, have their Guiltineſs much increaſed, and do become more exceedingly ſinful upon this account.

And of ſuch evil Thoughts as theſe, we may reckon theſe three Heads or Degrees.

1. A ſtrong and lively Imagination, and as it were, an acting over of Sin in our Minds: that is, when we delight our ſelves with the Thought of that Pleaſure or Gratification of Senſe or Paſſion we have taken in, or might receive from, ſome ſinful Act. And thus we may become guilty before God, of Sins which we never acted; and may double or treble, or much oftner multiply the Guilt of a Sin, which yet it may be we never were but once guilty of in Act.

I ſay, firſt, we may thus become guilty before God of Sins that we never acted. For thus, if a Man who is kept back by Fear

Fear or Cowardice, or ſome temporal Conſideration, from taking his full Revenge on one who he thinks has injured or affronted him, ſhould yet do all this in his Fancy and Imagination; and ſhould hugely pleaſe and delight himſelf with the Thought of his having his Enemy at his Mercy; with the Dream (as I may call it) of having done his Enemy ſome ſuch notable Miſchief, as yet perhaps he neither has, or ever will have, Power and Opportunity to execute. That this malicious and revengeful Mind renders a Man guilty before God, who ſees the Heart, and knows all that is within us, we are plainly told by St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. iii. 15. *He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer:* and by our *Saviour*, Matth. v. 22. *He that is angry with his Brother, without a Cauſe, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment.*

And by this we may alſo (as was farther obſerved) double, or treble, or much oftner multiply the Guilt of a Sin, which yet it may be we were never but once guilty of in Act: *viz.* by revolving it o-

ver in our Minds, by thinking of it with Delight and Approbation, by ſtrongly imprinting it on our Fancy and Imagination, and receiving ſuch a ſort of Pleaſure or Gratification from the lively Remembrance and Repreſentation thereof, as we once did from the Act it ſelf. And thus a Man, who is feeble and decay'd thro' Age, may nevertheleſs be guilty of all the Sins of his Youth; and he is ſo, when he takes Pleaſure in the thought of the youthful Sins which he then committed, is ſorry to think that thoſe Days are over, and could wiſh himſelf as well able now to act the ſame Lewdneſs as he once was. And thus alſo a Man, who by reaſon of Sickneſs or other Indiſpoſition of Body, is afraid to drink to Exceſs, fearing that one Surfeit would endanger his Life, may yet be guilty of the Sin of Drunkenneſs before God; and is ſo, when he remembers with Delectation the merry Bouts he has had formerly, moans his own ſad Hap (as he reckons it) that he can now no more indulge to himſelf the like Exceſſes; and envies, in ſome ſort, their Happineſs,

who,

who, being of ſtronger Conſtitutions than he was, could hold out longer than he did.

And, I ſay, that all Imaginations of ſuch kind do render us as guilty in the ſight of God, of the Sins ſo repreſented and delighted in, as the outward Act thereof would do in the ſight of Men; becauſe God ſees as clearly, and underſtands as fully, all the Conceits and Imaginations of the Heart, all the Inclinations and Workings of the Mind, as Men do the outward Actions of the Body. And beſides, he who is in his Heart a Murderer, an Adulterer, a Thief, or the like, would certainly, having Opportunity, be ſo in his Actions too, if that were as ſafe, and as free from Shame and Danger as the other. He wants not Will to commit any Wickedneſs with his Body, whoſe Mind is already defiled and polluted; and if in Fact he does not commit it, it can't be Conſcience towards God, but Care of his Reputation, or Fear of temporal Puniſhment from Men, or ſome other worldly Conſideration, which reſtrains him from it.

And this leads me to mention another Degree of evil Thoughts of this kind, *i. e.* of ſuch Thoughts as are evil, by reaſon of their relation to Acts of Sin; *viz.*

2. When we give the Conſent of our Will to any Sin, and would very gladly commit it, but only that we want Power and Opportunity to do it: in which Caſe we are every whit as guilty of the Sin before God, as if we had actually done it. For in all Caſes it is the Conſent of the Will to the Sin which makes us guilty, and not merely the Act it ſelf, if it was done without a Conſent of the Will to it. Thus, for inſtance, the killing of a Man, whether deſignedly or by Chance, is the ſame thing as to the Act; for in both Caſes there is an innocent Man killed; and yet one only was Murder, the other was not ſo: it was Murder when it was done deſignedly, it was not Murder when it was done by mere Accident: and that which makes the Difference is, becauſe in one Caſe there was a Will of killing, and in the other there was not. From whence therefore it appears, that it is only the Conſent

Conſent of the Will to a ſinful Act, which contracts the Guilt. And if ſo, then it clearly follows, that whenever there is ſuch a Conſent of the Will to a Sin, there is all the Guilt of the Sin contracted, altho' it happens that the Act of Sin be not done. And ſo our *Saviour* himſelf has determined in one Inſtance, at ℣. 24. of this Chapter; and the Reaſon is the ſame in other Caſes; *He* (ſays he) *that looketh on a Woman, to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.*

3. Laſtly: a farther Degree of ſuch evil Thoughts as are, or become ſinful by Reaſon of their relation to ſinful Actions, is, when the Will conſents not only to the Sin itſelf, but alſo to the Means and Method of bringing it into Act: that is, when we do not only like and approve of the Sin, but alſo fully purpoſe within our own Minds that we will commit it, and ſet our ſelves to contrive Means how to bring our wicked Purpoſe to paſs. In which Caſe, altho' by ſome Chance which happens, or Force which is laid upon us, our Purpoſe

comes to be defeated, and we do not really act the Sin which we intended, we are nevertheleſs as completely guilty of the Sin, as if we had acted it; it being not thro' any want of Will, or Endeavour on our part, that we did not, but merely thro' want of Power; or becauſe (much againſt our Will and Deſire) we were hinder'd by ſome Force which over-ruled us.

For thus, if a Man running at another with a naked Sword, with a full Intention to kill him, ſhould chance to make a ſtumble by the way, and ſo give time to the other to eſcape; or if deſigning to ſhoot him, and for that End going to let off a charg'd Piſtol at his Breaſt, the Piſtol ſhould happen to miſs firing: or, if intending to poiſon him, he ſhould prepare and mix the Poiſon, and give him that Cup in which he thought the Poiſon was, but by a Miſtake ſhould take up and give him another Cup like the other, in which there was nothing but wholſome Drink: who ſees not that in all theſe Caſes the Man is in right Reaſon, and before God, as guilty of the Murders which he gave ſuch a

full

full Conſent to, as if he had actually committed them? And the like might be ſaid in other Caſes. The Sin is fully completed, when there is a full and perfect Conſent of the Will to it; altho' for want of Power or Opportunity, or by the falling out of ſome croſs Accident, the Act it ſelf be not done. And therefore the *wiſe Man* ſays, *Prov.* xxiv. 8. that *He that deviſeth to do Evil ſhall be called* (*i. e.* according to the cuſtomary Uſe of that Word in Holy Scripture, *ſhall be*, or *really is*) *a miſchievous Perſon. The Thought of Fooliſhneſs is Sin.*

And this I take to have been the Caſe of *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, with regard to *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s Wife; the Story of which you have in the xx^th^ Chapter of *Geneſis*. He (not knowing indeed that ſhe was a married Woman but yet culpably ignorant of this, becauſe he had not firſt made due Enquiry about her; he, I ſay) had taken her into his Houſe, with a Deſign to keep her to himſelf; But God, 'tis ſaid, withheld him ('tis no matter now to enquire how) from the actual Com-

miſſion of the Sin; God *ſuffered him not to touch her:* nevertheleſs for proceeding thus far, for only fully purpoſing to take her to himſelf; he was judged by God as a Sinner, and he and all his Houſe were ſorely plagu'd, and worſe threaten'd, until he had reſtored her back again to her Husband.

Thus I have ſhewn what Thoughts are evil; or what Thoughts of Sin do pollute and defile the Soul. I proceed now, in the ſecond Place,

2. To ſhew what Carefulneſs to avoid ſuch evil Thoughts is requiſite in order to the preſerving that Purity of Heart, which is here preſcribed as the Condition of our ſeeing God; or as a neceſſary Qualification for it. And the Carefulneſs requiſite in order to this, conſiſts in two things; (1.) In avoiding, as much as may be, the Occaſions of evil Thoughts; and (2.) In uſing the beſt Methods we can to expel ſuch Thoughts from our Heart, in caſe we could not wholly hinder their entring thereinto.

(1.) In

(1.) In avoiding, as much as may be, the Occaſions of evil Thoughts. For there is no ſuch ſure way to avoid any Sin as by avoiding the Occaſions of it; and he who runs himſelf into Temptation, or does not (if he can) keep out of the way of it; by that alone gives ſome Conſent to the Sin, which he is afterwards by that Temptation prevailed upon to commit. Nay by that alone he conſents enough to it to make him guilty, tho' the Force of the Temptation ſhould happen to be broken by any other intervening Force or Accident. But,

(2.) In caſe without our Chuſing or Conſent, or after we had duly exerciſed the former Branch of Carefulneſs to prevent evil Thoughts, any evil Thought ſhould be injected into our Minds, either by the Suggeſtion of the Devil, or by any outward Object preſented or offered to our Senſes, in our innocent uſe of them; our Duty then, and another Branch of neceſſary Carefulneſs to keep the Heart pure, is, ſo ſoon as ever we diſcern any ſuch Thought within us, to endeavour immediately

mediately to expel it; by uſing the beſt Methods we can for that purpoſe: which are in general, either the fixing our Mind intently upon ſome other Object; or, if we can't quickly do that, the betaking our ſelves immediately to ſome bodily Labour or Exerciſe, which may, as it were by Force, divert our Minds from what they were thinking of before.

For thoſe evil Thoughts may moſt juſtly, and will moſt certainly, be imputed to us, which, howſoever they were at firſt occaſioned, we entertain with Delight and Pleaſure; when we give them a kind Welcome, and invite them to ſtay longer with us; nay, if we do not with Abhorrence reject them. While an evil Thought is no manner of ways conſented to, neither as to its Admittance, nor Continuance, it is only a Temptation: and a Temptation, if it be ſtoutly reſiſted does not defile us. For even our firſt Parents, in their State of Innocence, were tempted; they were tempted, I ſay, before they fell: and had they not complied with the Devil's Suggeſtion, had they preſently put it off with

with a *get thee behind me Satan* (as the ſecond *Adam* did) they would have been innocent (as he was without Sin) notwithſtanding the Temptation. That firſt Motion or faint Inclination to Sin, which was, perhaps, the Devil's Suggeſtion, or was occaſion'd by the beautiful Look of the forbidden Fruit, would not, I ſuppoſe, have defiled them, had they ſtopp'd there, and out of an awful Senſe of the divine Prohibition rejected with the utmoſt Abhorrence every Thought of Diſobedience: but the firſt Beginning of Sin, I take it, was, their entring into parley with the Tempter; and ſuffering it to be a Matter of Debate whether they ſhould obey God or not. And then likewiſe our Heart becomes impure, when finding that an ill Thought has entred into our Soul, we ſuffer it to abide there, give it quiet Entertainment, are pleaſed with it, and chuſe to dwell upon it. For tho' the firſt Thought might not, perhaps, be in our Power to hinder, being ſuggeſted we know not how, and having gotten into our Heart before we were aware, yet it was in our Power,

ſo

ſo ſoon as we diſcern'd it, to have endeavour'd by proper Methods to eject it; and if we did not ſo, the Stay of our Mind upon it afterwards, and our continued Attention to it, was our own Act; by that therefore we contract a Guilt, by that our Soul becomes polluted.

You ſee then now by all that has been ſaid, who are the *pure in Heart*; they are ſuch as take care to clean the Inſide as well as the Outſide; who will no more, voluntarily, harbour an evil Thought, than they will perpetrate a ſinful Action. In a Word, they are ſuch as make it their ſincere and utmoſt Endeavour, that their *whole Spirit and Soul*, as well as *Body*, may be *preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord* Jeſus *Chriſt*.

I proceed now to the other main Head of my Diſcourſe, which was,

II. To ſhew wherein conſiſts the Bleſſedneſs, and what is the Reward of ſuch Perſons. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

1. Wherein conſiſts their preſent Bleſſedneſs; or for what Reaſons they may be ſaid

ſaid to be bleſſed, even at preſent. And,

(1.) One great Bleſſedneſs even at preſent of the *pure in Heart*, is this; that ſuch as have been careful firſt to purifie their Heart, will find little or no Difficulty in the Practice of Piety and Virtue. It will be eaſy to them to do that which is good, if they be but careful not to think any thing which is evil. For as our *Saviour* ſays, it is *from within, out of the Heart of Man*, that *Adulteries, Fornications, Murders, Thefts, Deceit, and Blaſphemy*, and all ſuch other Wickedneſſes in the outward Behaviour, do *proceed*; as you may ſee in *Mark* vii. 21. And indeed ſo long as the Heart is corrupt, it is impoſſible but that it ſhould ſometimes ſend forth theſe evil Fruits. For *a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit: Matth.* vii. 18. But when the Heart is once throughly purified, the Fountain of Sin becomes thereby dried up, and it can no more ſend forth any of thoſe bitter Waters: *a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit.* And therefore our *Saviour*, in the xxiii[d] Chapter of St. *Matthew*, after he had been by ſeveral

ral Inſtances convincing the *Phariſees* of their Hypocriſy, preſcribes (at ℣. 26. of that Chapter) the cleanſing of the Heart from all Filth and Impurity as the ready, and only ſure, way of reforming the outward Actions. *Thou blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt the Inſide of the Cup or Platter, that the Outſide of them may be clean alſo.* And the *wiſe Man* exhorts (in *Prov.* iv. 23. to *keep* the *Heart with all Diligence*, for this Reaſon, becauſe *out of it are the Iſſues of Life.*

Indeed the Reformation of our Actions muſt begin with the purifying of our Thoughts and Affections; and when the Heart is once made clean, the Actions which proceed from thence will be ſo likewiſe: they will be ſo of courſe and without any farther Trouble. For how can he ſtretch forth his Hands to cheat and over-reach his Neighbour, who is contented with his preſent Condition, and covets nothing which is another's? How can he kill, who does not permit himſelf ſo much as to be angry? How can he commit Adultery, who will not entertain an unclean

unclean Thought in his Breaſt? In fine, what Danger can there be of his Proceeding to the outward Act of any Sin, who checks and repels the very firſt Thoughts of it, or Motions towards it?

(2.) Another great Bleſſedneſs, even at preſent, of ſuch as are pure in Heart, conſiſts in that Peace of Conſcience, that ſpiritual Joy and Satisfaction of Mind which does conſtantly attend this Virtue. Such inward Peace is a Bleſſedneſs which all thoſe are ſure to have who are inwardly pure, and which none elſe can have. For all that they can reaſonably expect who only ſeek to commend themſelves to the Eyes of Men by an outward Blameleſſneſs of Converſation, is to have their good Word and Applauſe; and that indeed they may obtain: but what Joy or Comfort can they take in that, while at the ſame Time they can't chuſe but condemn themſelves, and muſt know that they are alſo condemn'd by God, who ſees perfectly all their Hypocriſy, and knows that their Heart is not right with him? But that is true Comfort and Conſolation, when we are acquitted by

by our own Conſciences, and can appeal to God as well as to Men to judge concerning us; when we can ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my Reins and my Heart. Search me, and know my Heart; try me and know my Thoughts.* Or with good *Hezekiah*, when he lay, as he thought, upon his Death-bed, *Conſider, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart.* There is an ineffable Joy and Pleaſure of Mind, reſulting from the Conſciouſneſs of our own Uprightneſs and Integrity of Heart; a wonderful Confidence and Boldneſs both towards God and Men; ſuch as will make us fearleſs of the greateſt Dangers, and ſupport us with Comfort under the ſoreſt Afflictions and Miſeries of this mortal Life. *Our Rejoicing is this*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in this World.* And, *If our Heart condemn us not*, ſays St. *John*, *then have we Confidence towards God.* Such is the preſent

Bleſſedneſs

Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are *pure in Heart*. I proceed now in the ſecond Place,

2. To ſhew what is alſo their future Reward; *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

They ſhall ſee God. But how, will ſome be ready to ask, can that be? How can they ſee God, who, as the Scripture, plainly teſtifies, cannot be ſeen at all? for therein, Inviſibility is frequently aſcribed to him as one of his glorious Attributes. *They endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, ſays the Author to the *Hebrews*. And St. *Paul* ſays of our *Saviour*, *Col.* i. 15. that he is *the Image of the inviſible God*. And in another Place, he uſes this Form of Doxology, 1 *Tim.* i. 17. *To the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, be Honour and Glory, for ever*. And therefore when *Moſes* had deſired this Favour of God, that he might ſee his Glory, he was anſwered by God himſelf, that he had asked an impoſſible thing; *Exod.* xxxiii. 20. *Thou can'ſt not ſee my Face*. And the *Apoſtle* declares in general, 1 *Tim.* vi. 16. that his Dwelling is *in* ſuch *Light* as *no Man*

can approach unto; that *no Man hath ſeen him, or can ſee him.* And this is a moſt certain Truth; for God being a pure and immaterial Spirit, cannot poſſibly be the Object of our corporeal Sight. We may as well deſire to ſee a Sound, or to ſee a Thought, as to ſee a pure Spirit with our bodily Eyes. It is plain therefore that this Promiſe, *they ſhall ſee God*, is not to be underſtood in the literal Senſe; we muſt by no means conceive ſuch a Sight or Viſion of God, as we now have of ſenſible and material Objects.

But if this be not, what then, you'll ſay, is the meaning of this Promiſe, *they ſhall ſee God?* I anſwer,

(1.) By the Sight of God may be meant a Knowledge of God, a good Underſtanding of the divine Nature, Attributes and Perfections. And this, you'll ſee, is ſometimes the Scripture Notion of this Phraſe of *ſeeing God*, if you compare ℣. 18. of Chap. i. of St. *John*'s Goſpel, with ℣. 27. of Chap. xi. of St. *Matthew*'s; in the former of which Places it is ſaid; *No Man hath ſeen God at any time: the only begot-*

ten Son, which is in the Boſom of the Father, he hath declared him: and in the latter of which, the ſame Senſe is thus expreſſed, *No Man knoweth the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* From whence it is plain, that to *ſee God* is the ſame as to *know God*, theſe two being uſed as Phraſes of the ſame Signification.

And thus underſtood, the Reward here promiſed to the *pure in Heart*, that *they ſhall ſee God*, is, in part, beſtow'd upon them even in this Life; for even here, the Spirit of God dwells in pure and undefiled Souls, imparting and communicating to them ſuch Knowledge of God, as thoſe Souls are not capable of, which are immerſed in Matter, and polluted with carnal Affections, and *fleſhly Luſts*, which, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, do *war againſt the Soul.*

And yet the cleareſt Knowledge of God, which the moſt purified Souls have or can have, in this Life, is but ſmall, and very imperfect, in Compariſon with what it will be when they come to Heaven. For,

as the *Apoſtle* ſays, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 12. *We now know but in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.*——*For now we ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face. Now*, ſays he, *I know in part; but then ſhall I know, even as alſo I am known.* And to the ſame purpoſe it is ſaid by St. *John*, in his 1 Epiſt. iii. 2. that *when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* And then he adds, at ℣. 3. (preſcribing the very ſame Condition of obtaining this bleſſed Viſion, which is preſcribed in the Text,) *And every Man that hath this Hope in him*, (*i. e.* the Hope of *ſeeing God as he is*) *purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.*

(2.) A farther meaning of the Promiſe here made to the *pure in Heart, they ſhall ſee God*, may be this; that they ſhall *ſignally experience the Love and Favour of God*; that God will be very kind, benign, and bountiful to ſuch Perſons, and deal extremely well with them. For in this Senſe likewiſe the Phraſe of ſeeing

ſeeing God is ſometimes uſed in holy Scripture. Thus *Job*, expreſſing the aſſured Confidence he had of God's Mercy and Goodneſs, notwithſtanding his preſent diſtreſſed, and ſeemingly hopeleſs, Condition, does it thus, *Job* xix. 26. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day*, or, at laſt, *upon the Earth; and tho' after my Skin Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and mine Eyes ſhall behold, and not another.* Which Words, tho' they may be underſtood in a more ſpiritual Senſe, as expreſſing the good Man's Hope of a bleſſed Reſurrection of his Body after Death, to an immortal Life; and are accordingly accommodated, as they may well be, to that Senſe, by our Church, in her Office for the Burial of the Dead; are yet generally underſtood by Interpreters to have been ſpoken by *Job* himſelf with another View, *i. e.* with a Proſpect of his Reſtoration to that proſperous worldly Eſtate which he had been once in, thro' the Goodneſs of God, who he made no doubt would *at*

laſt, when he had ſufficiently tried him by Afflictions, make his Favour towards him as manifeſt as he had now ſeem'd to do his Diſpleaſure. As therefore, when God afflicts any Perſon, he is ſaid in Scripture to *hide his Face from him*; ſo when he delivers him from his Affliction, he may be ſaid to *ſhew his Face to him* again: and the Perſon who had been before afflicted, may well expreſs this bleſſed Change of his Condition by the Phraſe of his *ſeeing God*, whom he could not ſee before, while his Face was hidden from him. And in the xxxiii[d] Chapter of that Book, at ℣. 26. Deliverance from Affliction is manifeſtly intended to be expreſſed by this very Phraſe: *He* (*i. e.* the afflicted Perſon) *ſhall pray unto God*; *and he will be favourable unto him*; *and he ſhall ſee his Face with Joy.*

And if we take the Promiſe of the Text in this Senſe, *the pure in Heart ſhall ſee God*, that is, they ſhall find God very gracious and favourable to them: it is alſo made good to them both in this World, and in the next. For here they partake in

in great Meaſure of the divine Benignity; according to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. lxxiii. 1. *Truly God is loving unto* Iſrael, *even unto ſuch as are of a clean Heart.* But hereafter they ſhall be filled and ſatiated therewith; according to that other Place in *Pſal.* xvii. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs; and I ſhall be ſatisfyed, when I awake after thy Likeneſs.* But,

3. Laſtly: Another meaning of this Phraſe, *they ſhall ſee God*, and which was moſt certainly intended by it in this Place, is, that *the pure in Heart* ſhall be admitted into God's Court and Kingdom, be allow'd to live for ever in his Preſence, and be made Partakers of the Joy of their Lord.

Heaven is undoubtedly the ultimate Meaning of all the Promiſes which are made here in this Chapter, to the ſeveral Graces and Virtues here mention'd; and therefore, more eſpelially, muſt it be ſo of this. For the Promiſe, that *the pure in Heart ſhall ſee God*, implies that they ſhall be there where God is to be ſeen; that is, in Hea-

ven: that they ſhall live in his Preſence; and *in his Preſence*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, there *is Fullneſs of Joy*, and *at his right Hand* there *are Pleaſures for evermore*. To ſee God, is (as was ſaid before) to know God; and *this* (as our *Saviour* ſays, *John* xvii. 3.) *is Life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and* Jeſus Chriſt *whom thou haſt ſent*. And accordingly the holy *Pſalmiſt*, in *Pſal.* xxiv. after he had ask'd that important Queſtion, *Who ſhall aſcend unto the Hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand up in his holy Place?* makes Anſwer at *v.* 4. *He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart.* A pure Heart is indeed the indiſpenſible Condition of everlaſting Happineſs; for *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* And conſidering the cloſe and neceſſary Connexion that there is between Purity of Heart and Purity of Life, it may not improperly be ſaid, that this is the only Condition requiſite. For if our Heart be pure, our Hands will be clean too; and if our Heart be right with God, all our Actions, our whole Service, tho' otherwiſe

wiſe very imperfect, will be graciouſly accepted and rewarded by him.

Thus, you ſee who are the *pure in Heart*, and the Bleſſedneſs and Reward of ſuch Perſons.

What remains then, but that, in Contemplation of this great Reward, we all ſet our ſelves ſtudiouſly to this Work, of purifying our Hearts; adding to our own ſincere Endeavours our earneſt Prayers to Almighty God for his Aſſiſtance; ſaying, every one, with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.*

And that he will be graciouſly pleaſed to do this for us all, we humbly beg in the Name, and for the Sake, of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever.* Amen.

THE

THE NATURE AND EXPRESSIONS OF A PEACEFUL TEMPER.

DISCOURSE X.

The Nature and Expreſſions of a peaceful Temper.

MATTH. v. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the Children of God.

IN this (as in all the former Beatitudes) there are two things to be enquir'd into.

I. Who are the Perſons here ſpoken of, *the Peace-makers*; and,

II. What is both the preſent Bleſſedneſs, and the future Reward of ſuch Perſons; *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers, for they*, &c.

I begin with the firſt, which was,

I. To enquire who are the Perſons here ſpoken

ſpoken of, and pronounced bleſſed; *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers.*

The *Peace-makers*, Εἰρηνοποιοὶ, the Word could not have been rendred more exactly than it is in our Tranſlation; and yet I believe the *Engliſh* Word, *Peace-maker*, in the Senſe it is commonly uſed, is not of ſo full and large a Signification as the *Greek* Word is; for what we ſhould commonly underſtand by a Peace-maker, or a Maker of Peace, would be only one who endeavours, ſo far as in him lies, to promote Peace among Friends, or to make Peace between ſuch as are at Variance; whereas the *Greek* Word, in its common Uſe, ſignifies not only this, but a great deal more; *i. e.* not only one who makes Peace between others, but who is alſo himſelf of a peaceful and quiet Temper, who *ſtudies Peace*, who *follows after Peace*, and *after* all thoſe *things which make for Peace.*

For thus an habitual Sinner, one who makes a Courſe and Practice of Sin, is called in the *Greek*, 1 *John* iii. 4. Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, *One that makes Sin*, we might render

render it, *a Sin-maker:* and, on the other ſide, he, the general Courſe and Tenor of whoſe Life and Converſation is upright and unblameable, is call'd Ὁ ποιῶν τ̀ δικαιοσύνην, 1 *Joh.* ii. 29. *i. e. One that makes Righteouſneſs.* As therefore by the firſt, *viz.* by the Man who makes or does Sin, we underſtand one who gives his Mind to it, and makes a Practice of it: and as by the latter, *viz.* the Man who makes or does Righteouſneſs, we underſtand one who gives himſelf wholly to Virtue, and makes it his Aim and Study to live a good Life; ſo, by the ſame Reaſon, he who makes or does Peace, Ὁ ποιῶν τ̀ εἰρήνην, or, which is the ſame in one Word, Εἰρηνοποιὸς, muſt be one who gives his Mind to Peace; *i. e.* (as was ſaid before) one who is of a quiet and peaceful Temper; one who is ſtudious and deſirous of Peace, and endeavours, to the utmoſt of his Power, to conſerve and keep in peace both himſelf and all others.

And this alſo is the uſual Signification of the *Latin* Word, *Pacificus*, which anſwers exactly to the *Greek* Word which is here

here uſed. *Pacificus*, if we regard the Derivation or Compoſition of the Word, ſhould ſignify only one who is a Maker of Peace, or a Compoſer of Differences; but in common Uſe it is always taken in a larger Senſe, and what is meant by it is a peaceable-minded Man, one who ſhews his Love and Deſire of Peace all manner of ways; *i. e.* as well by living quietly himſelf, and ſhunning all Occaſions of quarrelling with others, as by endeavouring to prevent Contentions among his Neighbours, and to make them Friends again when they are fallen out. This laſt indeed, *viz.* a Deſire and Endeavour to preſerve and maintain Peace among others, is one Fruit of a peaceful Temper of Mind, but it is not the only Fruit of it. A Man who loves Peace can't, to be ſure, like to ſee his Neighbours jarring and quarrelling, and ſo will endeavour what he can to reconcile them; but then the ſame Love of Peace will likewiſe make him look at home as well as abroad, and be at leaſt as careful to avoid quarrelling himſelf with others, and as willing to be recon-

reconciled to and at Peace with others, who have quarrel'd with him, as he is deſirous to reconcile and make up the Differences which are between his Neighbours.

The Peace-makers therefore, here in the Text, are Lovers of Peace; they are ſuch as are of a peaceful and quiet Diſpoſition; for if they were not ſuch, they could not be Peace-makers in any Senſe of the Word: becauſe if a Man be not himſelf of a peaceful Temper, it can ſcarcely be ſuppos'd that he ſhould be very deſirous of making Peace among others: or if he ſhould deſire it, and go about to do it, it is probable it would be but with ſmall Succeſs; for he who is himſelf of a quarrelſome and contentious Spirit, is of all Perſons in the World the moſt unfit to undertake, and the moſt unlikely to accompliſh ſuch a Work.

Taking it for granted then, that by the Peace-makers here pronounced bleſſed, we are to underſtand in general ſuch as are quiet and peaceable-minded Men: I ſhall now, for the farther Explication of the Nature of that moſt excellent Grace and

Virtue which is here commended, do theſe two things:

1. I ſhall ſhew in general wherein this peaceful Temper of Mind does conſiſt; and withal, what are the general Fruits and Effects which it is apt to produce, and whereby it will ſhew it ſelf in the outward Converſation. And,

2. I ſhall then proceed to ſhew more particularly how this Duty of Peace-making may be diſcharged; or what are the moſt probable and hopeful Means both of keeping our ſelves in Peace, and of preſerving and making Peace among others.

1. I ſhall ſhew in general wherein the peaceful Temper of Mind, here enjoyn'd, does conſiſt; and withal, what are the general Fruits and Effects of ſuch a Temper, whereby it will diſcover and ſhew forth it ſelf in the outward Converſation.

Now Peace is a State of mutual Love and good Will, when each Side, or each Party, avoids diſquieting and moleſting the other, and when they both joyn together to promote, or at leaſt to preſerve the Welfare of each other. He therefore

is

is of a peaceful Temper of Mind, or a peaceable-minded Man, who earneſtly deſires and heartily wiſhes that both he himſelf, and all other Perſons, may be and continue in this State towards each other; that none may moleſt or trouble others, nor be troubled and diſquieted by them; but that he himſelf with others, and others with him, and every Man with each other, may live together harmleſſly and inoffenſively, lovingly and friendly, and readily diſcharge either to other all kind and neigbourly Offices.

And ſuch a Love and Deſire of Peace will naturally ſhew forth and expreſs it ſelf in the outward Behaviour theſe following ways.

1. A peaceable Mind or a love of Peace will be ſure to make us careful not to offend others, or by our croſs or injurious Behaviour towards them to give them any juſt Ground of Anger and Diſtaſte. For he who does this has already broken the Peace on his ſide, and is nevertheleſs to blame altho' the other may poſſibly be of ſuch a mild and quiet Temper as not

to lay hold on that Occaſion of quarelling which he offer'd; for by giving the firſt Provocation, he plainly ſhews that he is of a contentious and quarrelſome Diſpoſition, that he is not deſirous that the Peace ſhould continue any longer. 'Tis plain therefore that this Man is not the Peace-maker in the Text; (being indeed of a Temper the moſt oppoſite that can be to him, ſo far from being a Peace-maker that he is a Peace-breaker) and conſequently that he is not one of the Children of God, nor has any Title to the Bleſſedneſs which belongs to them. For,

2. A peaceable-minded Man will be ſo far from giving Occaſion of quarrelling, that he will not take it when it is offer'd. For *it muſt needs be that Offences come* (as our *Saviour* ſays;) and therefore be a Man never ſo cautious of giving Offence, yet if he be reſolv'd not to paſs by any Offence, or to put up any Affront which is offer'd him, it is impoſſible that he ſhould enjoy a firm and laſting Peace. There always have been, and probably always will be, bad Men in the World, and they who

who are themſelves the moſt ready to do Injury are generally alſo the moſt apt to reſent any ill Uſage from others, even altho' they themſelves by beginning the Quarrel provok'd the others to treat them ſo; ſo that he who can't meekly endure one Affront, by returning that does but draw on himſelf a ſecond, and if he will not put up that, a third; and conſequently if he thus goes on returning every Injury, engages himſelf in an endleſs Broil; for if ever there be a Peace made, it muſt probably begin on his ſide, and ſo he had plainly better have begun it ſooner, before he had ſuffer'd ſo much Injury from his Adverſary: a peaceful Mind would rather have inclin'd him to put up the firſt Affront, and thereby have prevented the Quarrel; (for it was not a complete Quarrel till both Parties were engag'd in it;) and had he done ſo, he would have cut off Occaſion of Contention from him who deſir'd Occaſion, and almoſt forc'd him to Peace, even againſt his Will. For 'tis a very falſe Principle which revengeful Men go upon, *Veterem ferendo Injuriam, invitas*

vitas novam, that by bearing one Injury, they ſhould but encourage the Man that did it to do them another: for, on the contrary, to bear the firſt Injury with Patience, is the moſt likely Means to avoid a ſecond; whereas by revenging the firſt, they do almoſt certainly draw on a ſecond. And thus the *wiſe Man* obſerves, *Prov.* xv. 1. that *a ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, but grievous Words ſtir up Strife.* For when a Man who is quarrelſome and contentious, (as he may well be ſuppos'd to be, who at any time begins a Quarrel with another without any Provocation from him; when ſuch an one, I ſay) meets with a Man who is as ſurly and fierce as himſelf, he has his Deſign; for he has then an Opportunity of gratifying his contentious Spirit to the full; and his Paſſion, which at firſt was forc'd and groundleſs, and could not have continued long without Fuel to maintain it, meeting with ſuch vigorous Oppoſition, will naturally grow more fierce and outragious; as the Waves of the Sea make the greateſt Noiſe, and are raiſed to the greateſt Height, when they

they ſtrike againſt a Rock: whereas if he chances to light upon a meek and peaceable Man, who gives way to his Paſſion, and makes no Reſiſtance to it, his Fury will ſoon abate, and in a little time will be quite ſpent; like as the Waters of a rapid Torrent, which make ſuch a terrible roaring, and are ſo rough and boiſterous when they are pent up in a narrow Channel between two Rocks, quickly grow calm and ſtill when they come into a wider Chanel, and glide over nothing but the ſoft and ſmooth Sands. And this, I ſuppoſe, is what the *wiſe Man* meant by that Paſſage, in *Prov.* xxv. 15. *A ſoft Tongue breaketh the Bone*; (in which Proverb he is thought to allude to the common way of breaking a Flint, the hardeſt of Stones, on a Cuſhion or a Feather-Bed; his Meaning, I ſay, I ſuppoſe was) that the moſt fierce and fiery Diſpoſition is eaſilyeſt tam'd and pacify'd, by letting it take its Courſe, and making no Oppoſition to it. For indeed, he muſt be more cruel and ill-natur'd, than even very ill-natur'd Men generally are, who will go on to a-

buſe and affront a Man, whom he ſees reſolv'd, if it be poſſible, not to quarrel or contend with him.

3. Peacefulneſs does farther import an Eaſineſs to be reconcil'd, in Caſe any Quarrel has proceeded ſo far as to break out into open Acts of Hoſtility. This, I ſay, is another natural Fruit of a quiet and peaceful Temper of Mind, that it will make a Man very glad and deſirous to be reconcil'd to any who are at Difference with him, as well thoſe who have offended him, as thoſe whom he (unawares, perhaps, or thro' ſome ſudden and violent Paſſion) may have given Offence to.

From them who have offended him he will readily and gladly accept of any Overtures of Peace, not ſtanding nicely upon Terms of Honour, or requiring of them a ſlaviſh Submiſſion, or expreſs Acknowledgment of the Wrong done him, before he will vouchſafe to be reconcil'd.

But if he has injur'd or affronted any Man, he will then of his own Accord immediately ſue for Peace and Reconciliation, and in order thereto, will offer full Satisfaction

faction for the Wrong he has done.

Nay, farther; he who is truly deſirous of Peace will not ſtick to do this, I mean to make the firſt Offers and Overtures of Peace, even altho' the Quarrel began firſt on the other ſide, and he was drawn into it only by a ſtrong Paſſion, a high Provocation, or a ſudden Impulſe of Revenge.

For this indeed is the Cauſe of the long Continuance of moſt Quarrels among Men; that many times, tho' both Parties are well tir'd with contending, and would gladly enough be at Peace with each other, yet neither of them will condeſcend to make the firſt Motion towards it. I ſay therefore, that a Man who heartily deſires Peace will not ſtand nicely upon theſe Terms, expecting till his Adverſary (who, as he thinks, was the firſt Beginner of the Contention) ſhall acknowledge his Fault, and ſubmit to him, and beg his Pardon; but rather he will be apt to ſuſpect that he himſelf might poſſibly, tho' undeſignedly, give ſome Occaſion for that firſt Injury which was done him by the other, or that ſome Action or Expreſſion of his, though done

done or ſpoken without any ill Intention, might be miſ-underſtood by his Adverſary, and ſo might provoke him to do him that Diſcourteſy; or elſe, that ſome ill-minded Neighbour has reported ſome things to the other concerning him which were falſe, but which yet, being confidently reported, the other was not much to be blamed for believing; conſidering which things, a peaceable-minded Man will not ſcruple to tranſgreſs a little the Rules of Honour which are generally receiv'd, and be the firſt in making Overtures of Peace, altho' he is ſure that he was not the firſt who began the Quarrel. And this I ſuppoſe to be the meaning of the *Apoſtle*, in *Heb.* xii. 14. where he bids us to *follow Peace with all Men*; *i. e.* that we ſhould not only readily embrace it when it is offer'd, but that we ſhould our ſelves ſeek and ſue for it; that we ſhould not only joyfully receive it when it meets us, but that we ſhould earneſtly purſue it when it flies away from us. And to the ſame purpoſe we are exhorted by St. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 11. to *ſeek Peace, and enſue it*.

And

And indeed I cannot ſee why it ſhould be thought ſo diſhonourable a part, for a Man who has receiv'd Injury from another, and thereupon entred into Contention with him, to ſeek for Peace; and, in order to the obtaining it, to offer the firſt Propoſals of it even to the Man who did him Wrong, and thereby began the Quarrel with him.

I grant, indeed, that he who did the Wrong ought rather to deſire a Reconciliation with the Perſon whom he injur'd; for he is oblig'd not only in Intereſt, but by the ſtrict Rules of Juſtice, to offer Satisfaction for his Injury, and to requeſt that the Peace may be renewed which was broken thro' his Fault; but if another Man will not do his Duty, ſhall I therefore neglect my own Intereſt? If by his Injury I am grievouſly hurt and wounded, ſhall I refuſe to be heal'd, unleſs he who made the Wound will come himſelf and dreſs it? Is it ſo ſmall a Bleſſing to live in quiet, and to be free from Broils and Contentions, that I ſhould be unwilling to lay hold on it, unleſs I am woo'd and intreated

ed to accept it? Is it reaſonable for me to endure longer the Trouble of Contention, from which perhaps I might be free'd only by a Word's ſpeaking, merely becauſe my Adverſary, who gave the firſt Occaſion to it, and ſo has more Reaſon to deſire Peace than I have, ſeems inſenſible of his Obligation to it? *Solomon*, I'm ſure, was of another Mind, (and yet he underſtood as well as any Man, what was honourable or baſe) as you may ſee, *Prov.* xx. 3. *It is an Honour to a Man to ceaſe from Strife*; *i. e.* a Man who is truly wiſe and great, and of a generous Mind, will not count it a Diſparagement to him to break off a Quarrel, and to be the firſt in breaking it off, whoever it was that firſt began it: and then he adds, *but every Fool will be meddling*; *i. e.* it is an Argument and Inſtance of great Folly in a Man, when once he is engag'd in Strife, (whether it was by his own Fault or another's) to think himſelf bound in Honour to maintain the Contention as long as he can.

Beſides;

Beſides; why ſhould we think it ſo diſhonourable and ſo much below us even to ſue for Peace to our Brother who has offended us, when Almighty God himſelf has given us ſuch a wonderful Example of Condeſcenſion even in this very Inſtance? For when Mankind had grievouſly offended him, and by their Sins were become Enemies to him, and God might juſtly have proſecuted the War to the utmoſt, which if he had done it muſt have ended in our utter Deſtruction; and when we had no Thoughts of returning to him, but ſhould have continu'd as obſtinate in our Rebellion as the fallen Angels; he was then graciouſly pleas'd to ſend after us, and to propoſe Conditions of Peace to us; for to this purpoſe he ſent his only Son on a ſolemn Embaſſy to us, to offer us Terms, very eaſy Terms, of Reconciliation; and not only that, but to deſire and intreat us to accept of them; and he, after he had delivered this Meſſage, when he left the World and returned again to his Father who ſent him, took care to leave behind him and ordain in his Church a conſtant

ſtant Succeſſion of Men whoſe ſole Buſineſs it ſhould be to proſecute the ſame Deſign, according to that of the *Apoſtle*, 2 *Cor.* v. 20. where, ſpeaking of himſelf and other Miniſters of the Goſpel, he ſays; *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as tho' God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

Now what made God ſo earneſt, ſo ſolicitous (as it ſeems) to gain our Friendſhip? What made him, I ſay, deſire that of us, which we ought rather to have begg'd and entreated of him? For we were the Perſons who had broken the Peace, and begun the Quarrel; we therefore, tho' we had been equal, nay altho' we had been ſuperior to him, ought in Reaſon and Juſtice to have been the firſt in our Deſires and Endeavours to be reconcil'd: but God ſaw our Obſtinacy and pitied our Folly, and for that reaſon, rather than we ſhould ruin our ſelves by continuing the Enmity, graciouſly vouchſafed to ſeek after us ſince we would not ſeek after him. Why then ſhould not we much rather do the ſame to our offending Brother, even tho'

tho' it were only in Charity to him, and to prevent his continuance in Sin?

But then it may likewiſe be farther conſider'd; that as God was not, nor could be any Looſer by our obſtinate Rebellion, ſo neither could he be a Gainer by our Friendſhip; our Enmity had not taken away ought from his Happineſs, neither could our Reconciliation with him add any thing to it: how much greater Reaſon is there therefore that we ſhould be very forward in deſiring and propoſing Peace to any who are at Enmity with us, even tho' we are ſure that the Difference began thro' their Fault; ſeeing whoſe ſoever the Fault was, or whoever began the Contention, both are Sufferers by the Continuance of it, and there is no Man whoſe Happineſs and Welfare in this World does not in great meaſure depend upon the good Will of others? And how great and powerful ſoever any Man be, there is no one Perſon in the World ſo mean and inconſiderable, whoſe Enmity may not be hurtful, whoſe Love and Amity may not be beneficial to him.

I have

I have inſiſted the longer upon this Particular, becauſe Men are generally very partial to themſelves in this matter; for hardly any Quarrel ever happens among Men, but that each Party perſuades himſelf that the other began it; and many times tho' both are ſo weary with contending that they would be glad to give over; yet the Contention ſtill continues, becauſe neither of them will give over firſt, but each expects when the other, who as he thinks began the Quarrel, will likewiſe begin the Peace: thus I ſay it often happens, that when the Quarrel which they were firſt engag'd in is really over, (I mean when the Ground and Occaſion of it is perhaps quite remov'd;) yet ſtill they go on, like little Children, fighting and quarrelling as fiercely as ever, when all the Contention which now remains is only who ſhall have the laſt Blow.

And therefore the ſureſt way to put a quick End to all Contentions, is to perſuade each Party, whether he began the Quarrel or no, to offer Peace to the other; and no wiſe Man, who underſtands the Worth

Worth of Peace, will think it dearly bought at the ſmall Price of a Punctilio of Honour. But,

4. Laſtly. As a peaceable Mind will make us careful not to give Offence to others, and backward to take Offence when it is given, and ready to be reconcil'd in caſe any Offence has been either given or taken, and any Quarrel has happen'd between us and our Neighbour; ſo the ſame peaceable Temper of Mind will likewiſe make it very uneaſy to us to ſee our Neighbours quarrelling with one another. He who is a true Lover of Peace will love to ſee others live in Peace together as well as to live ſo himſelf; and therefore will endeavour (ſo far as he may do it without buſy Pragmaticalneſs) to make and preſerve Peace among his Neighbours; and therefore our *Saviour* in the Text expreſſes a peaceable-minded Man by a Word which according to its Compoſition or Derivation does moſt properly ſignifie (as we tranſlate it) a *Peace-maker*; becauſe whoever is of a peaceful Mind will be a Peace-maker; the ſame Love of Quietneſs which

makes him keep himſelf, as much as poſſibly he can, out of Contention, will alſo make him ready and forward to reconcile and make up (if it be in his Power to do it) the Differences which happen among his Neighbours.

And now I have finiſhed the firſt thing which I propounded to do in order to the Explication of the Nature of that excellent Grace, that moſt chriſtian Virtue which is here recommended to us: namely, to ſhew in general, wherein the peaceful Temper of Mind, to which our *Saviour* here annexes a Bleſſedneſs, does conſiſt; and what are the general Fruits and Effects of it, or by what Expreſſions it will ſhew forth and manifeſt it ſelf. *Viz.* 1. In a great Carefulneſs not to offend any, or give them juſt Ground of Diſpleaſure againſt us; 2. In not taking thoſe Occaſions of quarrelling which may be offer'd to us; 3. In being eaſily reconcil'd in caſe any Quarrel has happen'd between us and others, and laſtly in endeavouring (ſo far as we may without incurring Blame) to

compoſe

compoſe and reconcile the Differences of other Men.

Theſe are the genuine Fruits and Effects; theſe are conſequently the certain Signs and Marks of that peaceable Temper to which our *Saviour* in the Text annexes a Bleſſedneſs, and promiſes the Adoption of Sons. *Bleſſed are the Peacemakers, for they ſhall be called the Children of God.*

And from what has been ſaid it appears that there are two ſorts of Men eſpecially, whoſe Tempers being very oppoſite to this, do deſerve the ſevereſt Reproof. 1. They who are themſelves quarrelſome and contentious; and, 2. They who delight to raiſe or foment Diviſions and Diſſenſions among others.

1. They who are themſelves quarrelſome and contentious; who are of an angry, froward, waſpiſh and peeviſh Spirit: who are ready to do all manner of Wrong and Injury to others, and yet not able to put up the leaſt Affront or Indignity which is offer'd to themſelves.

Such as theſe are of a Spirit of all others the moſt contrary to the meek and quiet Spirit of our bleſſed *Saviour*, and to that which he requires in all his Diſciples. For, *by this*, ſays he, *ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one towards another*, *John* xiii. 35. But now *Charity* or Love (as the *Apoſtle* ſays of it, 1 *Cor.* xiii.) *ſuffereth long and is kind*;——*Charity is not eaſily provoked*; *Charity hides a Multitude of Sins*. Whereas, on the contrary, Hatred and Anger, Pride Covetouſneſs and Ambition, theſe are what incline Men to Quarrelling and Contention. *Hatred ſtirreth up Strife*, ſays the *wiſe Man*, *Prov.* x. 12. And again, *Prov.* xv. 18. *An angry Man ſtirreth up Strife:* And again, *Prov.* xiii. 10. *Only by Pride cometh Contention.* And *Prov.* xxviii. 25. *He that is of a proud Heart ſtirreth up Strife.* And *whence come Wars and Fightings among you*, ſays St. *James*; *come they not hence, even of your Luſts, that war in your Members?* Jam. iv. 1.

And

And as Strifes and Contentions are cauſed by the unruly Appetites, and vicious Inclinations of Men, ſo they alſo neceſſarily engage Men in many other Sins. Thus the *wiſe Man* obſerves, *Prov.* xvii. 19. *He that loveth Strife, loveth Tranſgreſſion*; *i. e.* he loves that which will neceſſarily draw abundance of Tranſgreſſions after it: and therefore St. *James* ſays, *Jam.* iii. 16. that *where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work.* Upon all which Accounts St. *Paul* juſtly reckons *Hatred, Variance*, and *Strife* among thoſe *Works of the Fleſh*, of which he ſays in *Gal.* v. 21. that *they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And yet,

2 They do not deſerve leſs Blame than theſe, but indeed rather more; who, whether out of Fear or Cowardice, or elſe to avoid the Evils which neceſſarily accompany Quarrelling and Contention, endeavour to keep themſelves diſengag'd from Strifes and Broils, but yet take great Delight in ſeeing others quarrel; and make it (as it were) a part of their Buſineſs to raiſe

and foment Diſſenſions and Diviſions among their Neighbours; either becauſe they are pleaſed to ſee Men bait and worry one another, out of a mercileſs and cruel Diſpoſition; or elſe becauſe they are in Hopes of making ſome Advantage to themſelves from the Contentions of other Men, according to that Obſervation of the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* xvi. 18. where he ſays of ſuch as cauſe Diviſions and Diſſenſions, that *they ſerve not our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *but their own Belly.*

But whatever be their Motive or Inducement to this, the Practice is very wicked in it ſelf, and the Means whereby they practiſe it are no leſs wicked; which are commonly Tale-bearing, Back-biting and Slandering, raiſing and carrying Lies from one ſide to the other, to create Miſunderſtandings between them; and all this while they think themſelves wonderfully wiſe and cunning, who have it in their Power ſo eaſily to ſet their Neighbours at Variance, and can enjoy the malicious Pleaſure of ſeeing them worry and deſtroy one another;

another; and yet keep themſelves in a whole Skin, and out of Harm's way.

But let not ſuch value themſelves too much upon this Wiſdom; for if only Peace-makers and peaceable-minded Men are the Children of God, theſe Peace-breakers and Makers of Miſchief in the World, however they may value themſelves, are the Children of the *Devil*; for they are his Children whoſe Works they do, and whoſe Likeneſs they reſemble. And ſo we are told by St. *James*, *Jam.* iii. 15. *If ye have bitter Envying and Strife in your Hearts, glory not*, ſays he, *and lie not againſt the Truth; for this Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh; but the Wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable.* —— And *the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of them that make Peace.* And therefore the *wiſe Man* juſtly reckons them who *ſow Diſcord*, among thoſe *ſeven things* which the *Lord hateth*, yea, which are *an Abomination to the Lord*, Prov. vi. 19.

Neither is this Practice of ſowing Diſcord among Neigbours leſs hateful to Men than it is to God; ſuch as exerciſe themſelves therein being look'd upon by all, and that very deſervedly as the Peſts of Mankind, and common Enemies to the World. So that what Advantage ſoever a Man may vainly propound to himſelf, to reap from the Diſſenſions which he ſows among other Men; he will hardly ever be able to carry his Matters ſo cunningly, but that his Villany will at laſt be diſcover'd: and then he will be ſure to draw the Hatred of both Parties upon himſelf; and ſo will not be able long to eſcape thoſe Miſchiefs which he deſign'd to bring upon others. *He that deviſeth Miſchief, and ſoweth Diſcord, his Calamity ſhall come ſuddenly; ſuddenly ſhall he be broken, and without Remedy*, ſays the *wiſe Man*, Prov. vi. 14, 15.

I ſhould now proceed to the next thing propounded, which was to ſhew more particularly, how this Duty of Peace-making may be diſcharged; or what are the moſt probable and hopeful Means both of keeping

ing our ſelves in Peace, and of preſerving and making Peace among others.

But this being a large Subject, I ſhall defer the handling of it 'till another Day.

THE

THE
DUTY
OF
PEACE-MAKING
EXPLAINED:

DISCOURSE XI.

The Duty of Peace-Making explained.

MATTH. v. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-Makers: for they ſhall be called the Children of God.

N this (as in all the former Beatitudes which I have before treated of) there are two things to be enquir'd into.

I. Who are the Perſons here pronounced bleſſed. And,

II. What is the Bleſſedneſs and Reward of ſuch Perſons.

I. Who are the Perſons here pronounced bleſſed; the *Peace-makers*. *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers.*

And

And by *Peace-makers* (as I have already obſerved in a former Diſcourſe) we are to underſtand in general ſuch Perſons as are of a quiet and peaceable Diſpoſition, which inclines them as well to live peaceably themſelves, as to promote and preſerve Peace among others. But for the farther, and more particular Explication of the Nature of that moſt excellent Grace which is here commended to us, I propos'd to do theſe two things:

1. To ſhew in general, wherein this peaceful Temper of Mind, here enjoyn'd, does conſiſt; and withal, what are the general Fruits and Effects thereof, whereby it will ſhew forth it ſelf in the outward Converſation. And,

2. To ſhew more particularly how this Duty of Peace-making may be diſcharged, or what are the moſt probable and hopeful Means both of keeping our ſelves in Peace, and of preſerving and making Peace among others.

1. To ſhew in general wherein this peaceful Temper of Mind, here enjoyned, does conſiſt; and what are the general Fruits

Fruits and Effects thereof, whereby it will ſhew forth it ſelf in the outward Converſation. And this Point I have already ſpoken to. For

By Peace (as I told you) we are to underſtand a State of mutual Love and good Will, when each Side, or each Party, avoids moleſting and diſquieting the other, and when they both joyn together to promote, or at leaſt to preſerve the Welfare of each other. He therefore is of a peaceful Temper, or a peaceable-minded Man, who earneſtly deſires, and heartily wiſhes that both he himſelf, and all other Perſons may be, and continue in this State toward each other; that none may moleſt or trouble others, nor be troubled and diſquieted by them; but that both he himſelf with others, and others with him, and every Man with each other, may live together harmleſſly and inoffenſively, lovingly and friendly, and may readily diſcharge either to other all kind and neighbourly Offices.

And ſuch a Love and Deſire of Peace and Quietneſs, will (as I told you) naturally

rally ſhew forth and expreſs it ſelf in the outward Behaviour, theſe following ways.

1. It will make us careful not to offend others, or by our croſs or injurious Behaviour towards them, to give them any juſt ground of Anger or Diſtaſt.

2. It will make us backward to take Offence when 'tis offer'd, and will conſequently diſpoſe us to interpret all the Speeches and Actions of others in the beſt Senſe, and readily to forgive even the real Injuries which are done us.

3. In caſe any Quarrel hath been between us and others, it will make us eaſy to be reconcil'd; *i. e.* not only readily to accept reaſonable Terms and Conditions of Peace when they are offered, but to be the firſt in propoſing Terms of Peace to any Perſon who is at Enmity with us, and that whether the Quarrel began by our Fault or by his. And,

4. It will alſo incline us to uſe our utmoſt Endeavour to preſerve Peace among others, and to reconcile the Differences which are between them.

Theſe

Theſe are the general Fruits and Effects, and conſequently Signs and Marks of a peaceable Spirit.

I proceed now to the ſecond thing propoſed, in order to the farther explaining the Nature of this moſt excellent Grace: which was,

2. To ſhew more particularly how this Duty of Peace-making may be diſcharged, or what are the moſt probable and hopeful Means of preſerving and making Peace.

But I think it needful firſt of all to premiſe, that what I intend to ſay, in treating of this Subject, ſhall concern only private Men, or Men conſider'd only as in a private Capacity; not Governors or Magiſtrates, at leaſt not conſider'd as ſuch: becauſe, altho' theſe have indeed the greateſt Share in this Duty, and their Power to preſerve and maintain Peace in the World be much greater than the Power of private Men; yet I judge it improper to diſcourſe in any Congregation of the Duty and Office of ſuch as are not there preſent to hear what is ſaid.

Now a private Man may be conſider'd in ſeveral Reſpects or Relations; *viz.* 1. As a Member of the Catholick Church, or as a Citizen of the World: 2. As a Member of a particular Church or Nation: 3. As a Member of a leſs Society or Corporation, (as I may call it) conſiſting of his Neighbourhood and Acquaintance: and 4. As a ſingle Man ſubſiſting by himſelf. And the Duty of Peace-making concerns him, in all theſe Reſpects and Relations. But becauſe the Means of diſcharging it, in theſe ſeveral Reſpects and Relations, are different, it will be neceſſary to diſcourſe of them ſeverally. And therefore, in the handling of this Subject, I ſhall ſhew diſtinctly,

1. What a private Man is to do towards the obtaining or preſerving the Peace of the whole World, or of the Catholick Church.

2. What is required of him, in order to the making or preſerving Peace in that particular Church or Nation to which he belongs.

3. How

3. How he may beſt preſerve and keep Peace among his Neighbours and Acquaintance. And,

4. By what Means he may moſt probably keep himſelf in Peace.

1. I ſhall ſhew what a private Man is to do towards the obtaining and preſerving the Peace of the whole World, or of the Catholick Church.

And 'tis plain that a private Man can do but little towards this by himſelf; but yet, if he be a good Man, he may do a great deal towards it by his Intereſt and Favour with God, who *has* the *Hearts of Kings in his Hands*, and can *turn them whitherſoever he will:* who *ſtilleth the raging of the Sea, and the noiſe of its Waves, and* (which is much harder yet) *the madneſs of the People:* who *maketh Wars to ceaſe in all the World; who breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in ſunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks.

In order therefore to the obtaining of this univerſal Peace, we ſhould be conſtant and fervent in our Prayers to Al-

mighty God, the God of Peace, that he would be pleaſed to tame the Fierceneſs of Men's Minds, and over-rule their exorbitant Paſſions, and put a ſtop to War and Bloudſhed.

And more particularly, that in order hereto, he would be pleaſed to enlarge the Borders of his Church, and enlighten the whole World with the Knowledge of his Truth; that all *the Kingdoms of the Earth* may *become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt, the *Prince of Peace*, under whoſe Reign it was long ago prophecied, *Iſaiah* ii. 4. that *Men ſhould beat their Swords into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks*; that *Nation ſhould not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhould they learn War any more*, Iſaiah xi. 6---9. That *the Wolf ſhould dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhould lie down with the Kid; and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together; and a little Child ſhould lead them: that the ſucking Child ſhould play on the Hole of the Aſpe, and the weaned Child ſhould put his Hand on*

on the Cockatrice-Den; that they ſhould not hurt nor deſtroy in all his holy Mountain. And laſtly, Pſal. lxxii. 7. that *in his Days the righteous ſhould flouriſh, and there ſhould be abundance of Peace as long as the Moon endured.*

Thus the ancient Prophets elegantly deſcrib'd and foretold the peaceful Reign of the *Meſſias.*

But alas! it is not the bare Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion which is able to make this wonderful Change in the Tempers and Manners of Men. Our own Obſervation of the Wars and Diſſenſions of *Chriſtendom*; nay, I may add, our own Experience at this Day, and indeed, in almoſt all the Days which we have liv'd in make it evident that Men may profeſs the Chriſtian Religion: nay, and that they may pretend extraordinary Zeal for it; and yet be of a Temper quite contrary to that peaceable Diſpoſition which Chriſtianity ſtrictly enjoyns. So that if ever this univerſal Peace be obtain'd, it muſt be by Mens living up to the Rules of their Profeſſion. In order therefore to it, it is our

Duty to pray yet farther, (as we are taught by our Church) not only that God would be pleaſed to enlarge the Bounds of his ſpiritual Kingdom, by bringing into the Chriſtian Fold all *Jews*, *Turks*, *Infidels* and *Hereticks*; but that he would alſo *inſpire continually the univerſal Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity and Concord*, and grant that *all they that do confeſs his holy Name may agree in the Truth of his holy Word, and live in Unity and godly Love, holding the Faith in the Unity of the Spirit, and in the Bond of Peace.*

And thus heartily and fervently to pray to Almighty God that he woul'd be pleas'd to *give to all Nations, Unity, Peace and Concord*; and eſpecially that he would grant to his People, the People who are called by his Name, the Bleſſing of Peace, is, I think, all that a private Man can do towards the procuring the Peace of the whole World, or of the univerſal Church; unleſs it be by doing his Endeavour to preſerve the Peace of that particular Church and Nation to which he belongs: for indeed

deed the Peace of the whole conſiſts in the Peace of every particular Part; as it is in the Body, if any one Member of it be ſick or in pain, the whole Body is not well.

I proceed now therefore in the ſecond Place,

2. To ſhew what is requir'd of every private Man in order to the making or preſerving Peace in that particular Church or Nation to which he belongs.

But becauſe the Church is a Body diſtinct from the State, and the Peace and Unity of the Church and of the Nation conſiſt in different things, (for tho' indeed the Peace or Diviſions of any one of theſe have ordinarily a great Influence upon the other, yet 'tis poſſible that the ſame People conſider'd as a civil Nation may be at Peace; and yet conſider'd as a chriſtian Church may be much divided and diſunited: and on the other ſide, 'tis alſo poſſible that People who agree in the ſame Worſhip may fall out about other matters, ſo that the civil Peace may be much broken, and yet the Unity of the Church be preſerv'd;

I ſay therefore ſeeing the Peace of the Church and of the State conſiſt in different things) and are to be promoted by different Means, I think it will be beſt to ſpeak of them ſeverally.

1. Then, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what every private Man conſider'd as a Member of a national Church is to do for the making or preſerving Peace in that Church of which he is a Member; and no good Man ſurely but muſt needs think himſelf oblig'd to do as much as he can towards the procuring the Peace of the Church; for as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *the Church is the Body of Chriſt*, and there *ought to be no Schiſm in the Body.*

1. Firſt of all therefore, any private Man, altho' he has not Wiſdom or Authority ſufficient to take upon him to compoſe the Differences which are in the Church, may (and therefore ſo much to be ſure he ought to do; he may I ſay) make it a Part of his daily Prayer to Almighty God, that he would be pleas'd to incline the Hearts of thoſe who have Wiſdom and Authority to undertake, and inſpire them with

with Zeal and Induſtry to go thro' with, ſo good a Work: they who can't do much of themſelves, (and it muſt be granted that a private Man can't do much in this Buſineſs) ſhould at leaſt be inceſſant in their Prayers to him who is able to do all things, that he would heal the Church's Breaches and compoſe its Differences, that ſo we may all *with one Mind and one Mouth glorifie God even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And this is both declar'd to be our Duty, and alſo encourag'd with the Promiſe of a great Reward; in *Pſal.* cxxii. 6. *O pray for the Peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee; Peace be within thy Walls, and Proſperity within thy Palaces.*

2. Every private Man ought to endeavour to maintain and preſerve the Peace of the Church whereof he is a Member, at leaſt by holding conſtant Communion with it himſelf; and obliging all thoſe over whom he has Influence and Authority, his Children and Servants and others who depend upon him, to frequent the publick Worſhip; and to obſerve the Rules and Orders

Orders of the Church, which are eſtabliſh'd for the promoting of Order and the Conſervation of Unity; upon no account ſuffering himſelf or them to be led away into ſeparate and ſchiſmatical Congregations, ſet up againſt that conſtituted Church to which he belongs; I mean ſo long as he may communicate with the Eſtabliſh'd Church without Sin: for if indeed the Conditions of her Communion be unlawful, then they who enjoyn ſuch Terms, not they who refuſe to comply with them are guilty of the Schiſm and of the Breach of the Church's Peace.

But I ſay if the Terms of Communion required by the Church, of which it was our Fortune by the Providence of God to be born Members, are lawful, *i. e.* ſuch as, even in our own Judgment, we may comply with and conform to without committing Sin, then a Separation from this Church, muſt, even in our own Judgment, be thought needleſs; and if needleſly making a Diviſion in the Church and ſeparating from it be not a ſinful Schiſm I know not what is, or can be, ſo.

And

And this is a Point which I could wiſh were ſeriouſly conſider'd and laid to Heart by the preſent Separatiſts from our Church, I ſpeak not now of thoſe who are conſtant Separatiſts, as believing that our way of Worſhip is unlawful; for they, while they are thus perſuaded, have Reaſon for what they do; but I ſpeak of thoſe who allow our Communion to be lawful, and this not only in Words, but in their Practice too; for upon Occaſion, when they themſelves have a Mind to it, or in order to qualifie themſelves for a Place of Truſt or Profit, they will communicate with us; which (ſo much Charity we have for them) we believe they would not do upon any Account, or for any Advantage, unleſs they were perſuaded that they might do it lawfully; and yet for the moſt part they go to ſeparate Aſſemblies ſet up in oppoſition to the eſtabliſh'd Church, thereby not only making a Diviſion in the Church themſelves, but encouraging others to do the ſame.

But of all the religious Offices in which we are to hold Communion with each other,

ther, as Members of the ſame Church, there is none, the joyning in which does ſo much betoken Unity of Affection, and ſo much tend to conſerve and promote it, as the Participation of the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt: *We being many* (ſays the *Apoſtle*) *are one Bread, and one Body, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread*; 1 *Cor.* x. 17. Whatever little Differences there are between us in Opinion, or upon the Account of ſome little Offences given or taken on either ſide; yet if we did but conſtantly meet together at the Lord's Table, and duly conſider the Nature of that ſolemn Action; that we there all profeſs our ſelves Diſciples of the ſame Maſter, and Members of the ſame Body, of which Chriſt is the Head; the ſerious Conſideration of that near Relation which we have to each other, and of that Love which upon the Account of this near Relation we ought to bear to each other, would quickly either compoſe all our Differences, or elſe make us, notwithſtanding them, be as cloſely united in Affection towards each other, as

as if we were exactly of the ſame Mind and Judgment in every thing.

Thus it was in the primitive Times, in the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity, when the holy Communion was a conſtant Part of their publick Worſhip, and they never met together to put up Prayers to God, and hear his Word; but before they parted they partook alſo of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: then I ſay the Love of Chriſtians to each other was ſingular and remarkable, inſomuch that it became as a Proverb among the Heathens, *ſee how the Chriſtians love one another:* and I doubt not but that the want of Love and Charity which is now too viſible among Chriſtians is in great meaſure owing to our ſeldom Communions and to our ſcandalous Neglect of this moſt holy and divine Inſtitution. For want of meeting together ſo often as we ſhould, according to our Lord's Inſtitution, to celebrate the Memory of his Death, we come to forget that we are Brethren, all redeem'd by his precious Blood, and all made Partakers of the ſame heavenly Calling; and being eſtrang'd

eſtrang'd from each other in Church-Communion, the ſureſt Bond of Love and Friendſhip, we quickly come to be as much eſtrang'd in our civil Converſation. But,

3. A private Man may likewiſe contribute ſomewhat towards the Peace of the Church, by endeavouring to perſuade others to joyn in Communion with it. Thus we are exhorted by the *Apoſtle*, *Heb.* x. 24. *Let us conſider one another to provoke unto Love and to good Works; not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another.* And theſe brotherly Exhortations do oftentimes meet with good Succeſs, inaſmuch as they cannot well be ſuſpected to proceed from any worldly Intereſt or Deſign, (as ſome are apt to think every thing does which we ſay;) but merely out of brotherly Love, and an hearty Deſire of the Churches Peace.

4. Laſtly; A private Man may likewiſe ſomewhat promote the Peace of the Church to which he belongs, by diſcountenancing, and diſcouraging, and expreſſing his Diſlike of thoſe Men who needleſly ſeparate from it,

it, or cauſe Diviſions or Diſſenſions in it. And that this is what he ought to do, we are plainly taught by the *Apoſtle*, Rom. xvi. 17. *I beſeech you Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learn'd and avoid them: for they that are ſuch* (ſays he) *ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt but their own Belly.* If then we will believe the *Apoſtle*, 'tis Intereſt, and the Hope of worldly Gain and Advantage, which have the greateſt Influence upon thoſe who make needleſs Diviſions in the Church; *they ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly:* if therefore it could be ſo order'd that they who make it their Buſineſs to cauſe, or foment and uphold Diſſenſions in the Church ſhould be more probable to loſe than to get by their ſo doing; or that they ſhould have the ſame Inducement from worldly Intereſt to invite them to hold conſtant Communion with the Church, and to endeavour to ſupport and uphold the Eſtabliſhment, which they think they have to encourage Diſſent and Separation; there would

would be quickly an End of all ſuch Schiſm.

Thus I have ſhewn what a private Man may and ought to do for preſerving the Peace of the Church.

I now proceed in the next Place,

2. To ſhew what he may and ought to do to maintain the Peace of the civil State or Nation. And that what he can do towards it, it is both his Duty and alſo his Intereſt to do, we are plainly taught in *Jer.* xxix. 7. *Seek the Peace of the City whither I have cauſed you to be carried away Captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the Peace thereof ſhall ye have Peace.*

Now certainly; if it was the Duty of the *Jews* when in Captivity to ſeek the Peace of the City where they were held as Captives, as the Prophet here plainly declares; much rather muſt it needs be every Man's Duty to maintain and promote as much as he can the Peace of his own native Countrey: eſpecially, ſeeing as our *Saviour* obſerves, *Luke* xi. 17. it is impoſſible that any Kingdom or Nation ſhould long

long ſubſiſt, and much more impoſſible is it that it ſhould thrive and proſper, which is troubled with civil Commotions and Diſſenſions; *Every Kingdom* (ſays he) *divided againſt it ſelf is brought to Deſolation, and a Houſe divided againſt an Houſe falleth.*

And beſides; the Reaſon there added by the Prophet why the *Jews* were in Intereſt bound as well as in Duty, to ſeek the Peace of that City whither they were carried away Captive, is of much greater Force to engage Men to endeavour to preſerve the Peace of their own Countrey; *for in the Peace thereof*, ſays he, *ſhall ye have Peace.* It is indeed a vain thing, for any Man to hope for Peace and Safety to himſelf ſo long as the publick Community is broken by civil Diſſenſions, and in danger to be ruin'd thereby. And on the other ſide, they who labour to promote and preſerve Peace in the World; and eſpecially in that City or Countrey wherein they live, will in the Event reap the Fruit of their Labour to their own Advantage; and enjoy, in Proportion, the

Benefit of that Calm and Quiet which they make.

And there are ſeveral things which even a private Man may do, and which therefore he ought to do, for the Maintenance and Preſervation of the publick Peace. For to this end it is very requiſite.

1. Firſt of all; that he ſhould diligently uſe all the Means aforemention'd for the preſerving and maintaining Peace in the Church. For, as was intimated before, Diviſions and Diſſenſions in the Church are very apt to have an ill Influence upon the civil State; and thoſe Diſſenſions which begin upon a religious Account are always proſecuted with the greateſt Zeal, and are the moſt difficult to be compoſed. And I believe that ſince the planting of Chriſtianity in the World, there have been more implacable Feuds raiſed, and more bloody Battels fought, upon the Account, or under the Pretence, of Religion, than for any other one Reaſon whatſoever; and theſe religious Wars, as they are call'd, very rarely find an End till one of the contending Parties be deſtroy'd. And in this

this ſenſe I believe thoſe Words of our *Saviour* may be expounded, *Matth.* x. 34. *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace on Earth; I am not come to ſend Peace but a Sword. For I am come to ſet a Man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt her Mother, and the Daughter-in-law, againſt her Mother-in-law; and a Man's Foes ſhall be they of his own Houſhold.* Not that it was in our *Saviour's* Intention to make Men hate and quarrel with one another; for nothing is more contrary than this both to his Doctrine and to his Example: but the meaning is only this; that our *Saviour* foreſaw that this would be the Event of his coming; that his Religion being not heartily embrac'd, but only outwardly profeſs'd, would be the Occaſion, or at leaſt would be made the Pretence, of the moſt unnatural Diſſenſions, and irreconcileable Feuds among Men; and the ſad Experience of the whole chriſtian World ever ſince that time has abundantly verified our Lord's Prediction.

2. In order to the Preſervation of the publick Peace every private Man ſhould perſuade himſelf and endeavour to perſuade others to be eaſy and ſatisfied in that Place and Station, and contented with that Condition of Life wherein they are plac'd by the Providence of God, and the regular Courſe of things. For the Truth is, that tho' Religion, or ſome other plauſible Pretence, is oftentimes given out, yet 'tis Pride or Ambition or Diſcontent, or ſome other ſuch evil Principle which is always the true Ground and Reaſon of Tumults and Seditions and civil Wars. And ſo it is obſerved by St. *James*, *Jam.* iv. 1. *From whence come Wars and Fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your Luſts that war in your Members?*

Seeing therefore the publick Peace of any State or Nation can never be ſecur'd, unleſs every private Man be contented with that Station wherein God has plac'd him, it is plainly a neceſſary Part of every Man's Duty who deſires and ſeeks the Peace of his Countrey to perſuade himſelf and endeavour to perſuade all others to acquieſce

quieſce in the Orderings and Diſpenſations of the divine Providence; and to do their own Duty in the Station that they are in, neither neglecting thoſe Offices which do belong to themſelves, nor taking upon them to do thoſe Offices which do not belong to their Place; nor arrogating and aſſuming to themſelves any Place or Office which another is already regularly poſſeſs'd of.

And thus, if all in their ſeveral Poſts and Stations are careful to diſcharge their own Duties to each other faithfully, the whole Society will thrive and flouriſh, being at Unity in it ſelf; but if they fail therein, it muſt needs happen to any Civil Society or Body Politick, as it would to the Body Natural, in caſe the Hands, or Feet, or Eyes, or Mouth, or other Member of the Body, ſhould refuſe to perform thoſe Duties and Offices to the reſt of the Body, which they were by Nature fitted and contrived for; but the Feet ſhould take upon themſelves the Buſineſs of the Hands, and the Hands ſhould undertake the Office of the Eyes, and the Mouth

Mouth ſhould think it ſelf able to diſcharge the Work of the Ears; and the like. In which Caſe, while the ſeveral Members of the Body were thus contending with each other for Dignity and Superiority; and every one was aſſuming to it ſelf an Office which it was not fit for, neglecting in the mean time to perform thoſe Services to the Body for which it was deſign'd, and very fitly contriv'd; the Death and Diſſolution of the whole Body muſt needs very ſoon follow thereupon.

And thus, I ſay, it muſt needs alſo happen to any civil Society, in caſe the Members thereof, being ambitious to thruſt themſelves into Places that do not belong to them, will needs take upon them other Mens Employments, neglecting in the mean time that Office and Duty which is incumbent upon them in the Place wherein God has ſet them. If the Society be not very watchful over the Motions of ſuch diſorderly Perſons, or if it wants ſufficient Power to reſtrain their Exorbitances, and reduce them to a regular Motion within their own Sphere, the Conſequence

will

will be, that by the Influence or Communication of their Irregularity, the whole civil Body will quickly be put into Combuſtion and Confuſion: for *where envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work*, as St. *James* obſerves.

3. Laſtly: another thing whereon the publick Peace and Welfare of any State or Nation does very much depend, is the due Adminiſtration of Juſtice in diſpenſing Rewards and Puniſhments: and therefore, in order to the preſerving and promoting the publick Peace, it is plainly every private Man's Duty and Concern to look to this.

I do not mean that private Men ſhould (for I have juſt before prov'd that they ought not, to) uſurp the Magiſtrates Office, and take upon them to decide Controverſies, and execute Juſtice, not being legally call'd thereto; but what they may do, and what therefore they ought to do, in order to this End, is, when they are call'd thereto, to be aſſiſtant to their Governors, according to the Station they are in, in the Adminiſtration of publick Juſtice;

Juſtice; and, if need be, to lend their Help to thoſe to whom God has given the Power of the Sword, againſt ſuch as are unruly and diſorderly, and attempt to ſnatch the Sword of Juſtice out of their Hands to whom God has committed the Cuſtody and Uſe of it.

But above all, in order to this End, that *Judgment may run down as Waters, and Righteouſneſs as a mighty Stream*; and that *there be no Decay, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in our Streets*; it is every Man's bounden and indiſpenſible Duty, of what Condition, Calling, or Office ſoever he be, to put up at all times fervent Prayers to Almighty God, for the Welfare and Preſervation of their Governors, for their Direction in the Adminiſtration of their Office, and for the proſperous Succeſs of their Cares and Endeavours for the publick Welfare. And thus we are taught by the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore, that firſt of all Supplications and Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men*, (particularly

larly and eſpecially, for ſo it follows) *for Kings, and for all that are in Authority.* And this very Reaſon is immediately given for our ſo doing in the next Words, *that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable Life, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.*

For the Reaſon why Government was at firſt inſtituted by God, was, that Juſtice might be duly adminiſtred, and Peace be thereby preſerved among Men, according to that of St. *Paul*, Rom. xiii. 4. *He is the Miniſter of God to thee for Good. ——He is a Revenger, to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil:* and *Governors*, ſays St. *Peter*, are *ſent by him for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and for the Praiſe of them that do well*; 1 Pet. ii. 14.

Seeing therefore, that without Government there can be no Order, and conſequently no Peace; it plainly follows, that the Stability of the publick Peace of any Nation depends, in great Meaſure, upon the Firmneſs and Stability of the Government; and conſequently that a Man can't be a true Lover of his Country, and an

hearty Deſirer of its Peace and Welfare, who is not alſo a good and dutiful Subject to thoſe who are plac'd in Authority; not only not endeavouring himſelf to raiſe any Commotion or Diſturbance therein, not *meddling with thoſe that are given to change*, as the *wiſe Man* expreſſes it; but alſo lending all needful Help and Aſſiſtance, according to the Station he is in, of his Prayers and good Wiſhes, of his Purſe, and, if need be, of his Perſon, to thoſe who are appointed to adminiſter publick Juſtice, for the ſupporting of them in their juſt Dignity and Power.

Thus I have ſhewn in part how this Duty of Peace-making may be diſcharg'd, or what are the moſt probable and hopeful Means of preſerving and making Peace.

I have ſhewn what a private Man may and ought to do towards the obtaining and preſerving the Peace of the whole World, or of the Catholick Church, and alſo of that particular Church or Nation whereof he is a Member.

I ſhould now proceed, in the third Place, to ſhew how he may beſt preſerve and

and make Peace among his Neighbours and Acquaintance; and after that, in the fourth and laſt Place, by what Means he may moſt probably keep himſelf in Peace.

But the handling of theſe Points will be Matter enough for another Diſcourſe, and ſo I ſhall defer it to another Opportunity.

FINIS.

G.R. III.